

December 14, 2007

# CITY OF GROTON

## 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development



**Draft Proposed For Adoption**

**Planning and Zoning Commission**

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## **Acknowledgements**

December 14, 2007

# WELCOME



December 14, 2007

To the Residents of the City of Groton,

The Planning and Zoning Commission is pleased to present this proposed draft of the 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for consideration for adoption. The Plan is intended to reflect the collective thoughts and feelings of City residents about the future growth of the community.

The proposed Plan was prepared by a POCD Update Steering Committee and has been reviewed and refined by the Planning and Zoning Commission before submitting it for adoption.

It is anticipated that this Plan of Conservation and Development will be used by City of Groton boards and commissions, citizens, developers and other interested parties for guidance when making decisions about growth and development in the City over the next decade.

Sincerely,

David Rose, Chair  
Planning and Zoning Commission  
City of Groton



Throughout the Plan, this icon is used to suggest search terms for people who would like to find more information in the internet.

#### **Search Terms**

“Strategic Plan”  
“Comprehensive Plan”

## **PREFACE**



The City of Groton is growing and changing. New residents are moving into the City, land uses are being changed, and large local businesses (Electric Boat and Pfizer) are adapting to changed opportunities. The social and fiscal issues which affect the City are also changing.

As change occurs, there is also a desire for things to remain the same. For example, City residents want to protect important resources and preserve the attributes that make the City of Groton special to them.

Balancing growth and change with the special attributes of the City is part of what this Plan of Conservation and Development is all about. The Plan is intended to guide future growth and change to preserve the best of Groton while accommodating the needs of the community.

This Plan of Conservation and Development has been prepared in accordance with Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes. It is intended to be a statement of goals, policies, and recommendations which reflect the community's vision for the future physical layout of the City of Groton.

The Plan is built upon the previous plans prepared by the City and incorporates input from residents, City officials, a Plan Update Steering Committee, and the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Plan is intended to help guide and shape City actions over the next decade or so.

While the Plan is an advisory document, the policies and recommendations in the Plan identify actions and strategies which are felt to be in the best interests of the community.

In summary, Groton residents have prepared this Plan to guide the future conservation and development of the community and preserve and maintain the overall quality of life in the community.



# CONDITIONS & TRENDS

# 1

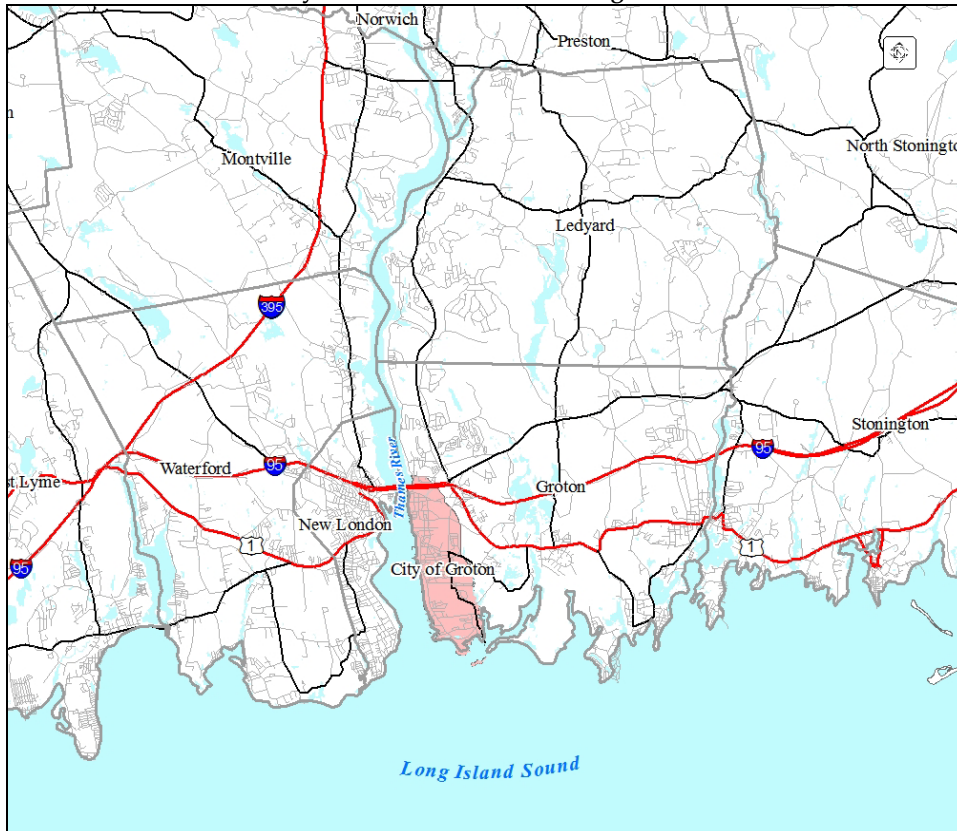


The City of Groton is a diverse community located on the eastern bank of the Thames River in southeast Connecticut. The City encompasses about three square miles and had a 2000 Census population of 9,288 people.

The City contains two major land uses that make the City known throughout the country and around the world:

- the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics (makers of submarines for the US Navy), and
- the research and development facilities of Pfizer Corporation (their largest research facility in the world).

City of Groton and Surrounding Towns



## Historic Overview

---

The Groton area was first settled by European immigrants in 1656. This area, known as Groton Bank, was across the river from New London (settled in 1644) and a logical area for new settlement. However, due to the difficulty of traversing the Thames River for church, trading, and town meetings, the General Assembly approved a petition in 1705 to allow creation of the Town of Groton.

Over time, the area along the eastern bank of the Thames River developed a focus on shipbuilding. Due to the strategic importance of the Thames River, Fort Griswold was established on the Groton side of the river (Fort Trumbull was established on the New London side) to defend these areas. The Groton Monument at Fort Griswold commemorates the Revolutionary War battle that occurred there in 1781.

In the late 1800s, the Eastern Point area became a popular resort area with the Griswold Hotel, a golf club, and a beach club. The resort was supported by steamboat service from its own wharf and by rail service.

As these areas grew and the demand for public services increased, there was discussion about how to provide these services. Since residents in the outlying rural areas of the Town of Groton did not want or need these services, the solution was to create a separate borough in 1903 to facilitate the provision of services. Eventually, this led to the establishment of a public utility company (now known as Groton Utilities) in 1904.

The borough later incorporated as the City of Groton in 1964. The City now constitutes an urbanized political subdivision of the Town of Groton.

The City of Groton plays a major role in the economy of southeast Connecticut and beyond. It is estimated that City businesses employ over 12,000 workers, providing job opportunities to residents of the region.

In addition to being a regional employment center (Pfizer and Electric Boat), Groton also hosts several regional attractions including the Avery Point campus of the University of Connecticut, Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park, and the National Submarine Memorial.

The City is unique in that municipal services are provided by two separate municipal entities. City residents receive public services from:

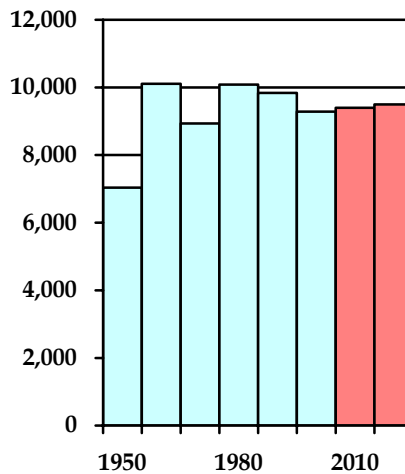
- the City (fire, police, public works, building, zoning, planning, solid waste),
- the Town (education, social services, assessment, tax collection), or
- both (parks and recreation).

## Population Trends

According to the Census, the City of Groton had a population of 9,288 people in the year 2000. This represents a decline from the peak population in 1960 and reflects smaller household sizes and changing regional growth preferences. Population change is expected to be modest in the future.

Unfortunately, due to a Census coding error, reliable demographic information (especially age composition) is not available for the City for the year 2000 and so it is difficult to assess how the City's age composition is changing over time.

However, if the trends of the past several decades continue, Groton will likely continue to be a community where the largest demographic groups will be younger adults (aged 20 to 54).



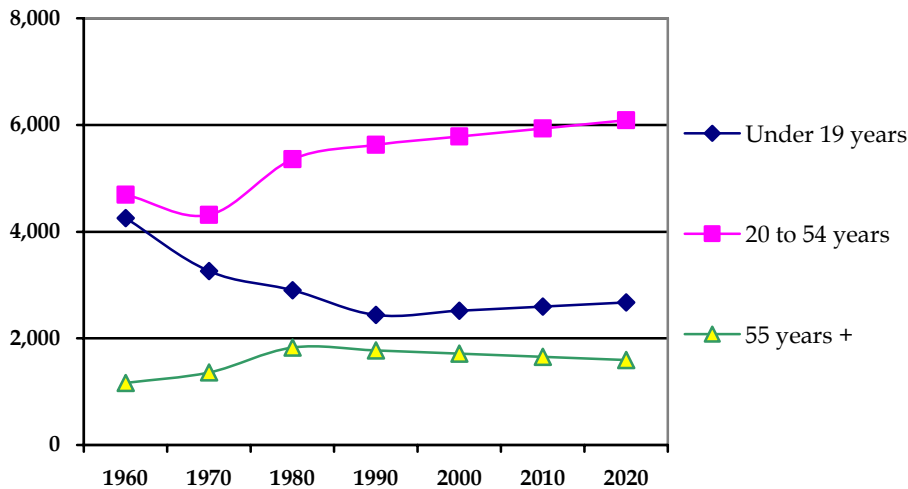
Source: US Census 1950 - 2000, Connecticut Office of Policy and Management



Additional census information is available from:

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

Number of People By Age Group



Source: US Census 1960 - 2000, Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

## A Diverse Housing Stock ...

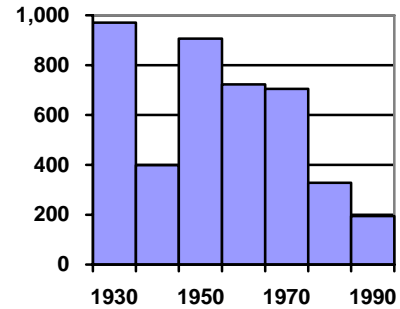
The City of Groton has a diverse housing stock. About one-third of the total units in Groton are single-family detached units (36%), about one-third are located in two to four family dwellings (36%) and the remainder (28%) are located in larger multi-family structures (more than 5 units).

More than half of the housing units in the City (55%) were built in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s during the height of "the Cold War" era of submarine production at Electric Boat. This may become an issue in the future if these housing units become less desirable than newer houses in other locations.

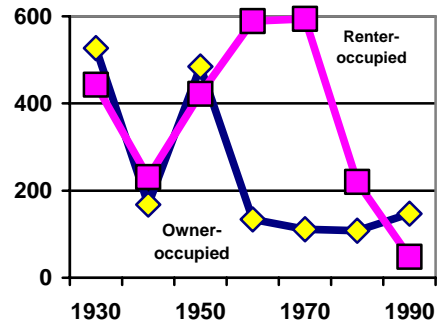
Most of the dwelling units in the City are renter-occupied (60%). During the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, most of the housing units added in the City were renter-occupied.

Due to the level of renter occupancy, there can be quite a bit of population turnover. The 2000 Census found that about 27% of City households had moved to that housing unit in the prior 15 months. Moreover, about 6 in 10 households had lived in their 2000 housing unit for five years or less.

2000 Housing Units (By Decade Built)



2000 Housing Tenure By Decade Built



Single-Family House



Multi-Family Housing



## A Changing Economy ...

The City of Groton has a strong economic base as a result of two major facilities located within the City limits:

- the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics (makers of submarines for the US Navy), and
- the research and development facilities of Pfizer Corporation (their largest research facility in the world).

From an economy once considered the most defense-dependent economies in the nation (due to Electric Boat), Southeastern Connecticut has diversified over the years to include:

- pharmaceutical research and development (Pfizer), and
- gaming /recreation / entertainment / conventions (Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos), and
- tourism (Mystic Seaport, Mystic Aquarium, Nautilus, Submarine Force Museum, Fort Griswold, etc.).

In the year 2000, Census data (see sidebar) showed that a higher percentage of Groton residents were employed in service occupations and a lower percentage in management and financial operations as compared with the County or State averages.

The industries employing Groton residents in the year 2000 show a significant concentration in entertainment / food service businesses (perhaps due to the casinos) and in manufacturing / construction (perhaps due to Electric Boat). Over the past decade, however, there has been a significant increase in entertainment/ food service employment among City residents and a decline in manufacturing and trade related businesses.

According to the 2000 Census, the 1999 median household income for the City (\$40,515) was lower than for the state (\$53,935). The median household income in the southern part of the City was significantly higher than that of the central or northern neighborhoods. The lowest incomes were in the central part of the City. On a citywide basis, about ten percent (10%) of the population was below the poverty level in 1999. Most of these residents live in the central part of the City.

### Service Occupations

	Percent
City of Groton	22%
County	20%
Connecticut	14%

2000 US Census

### Management Occupations

	Percent
City of Groton	9%
County	11%
Connecticut	16%

2000 US Census

### Other Occupations

	Percent
City of Groton	69%
County	69%
Connecticut	70%

2000 US Census

### Land Use Categories

Most land use categories are fairly self explanatory. However two categories deserve extra description.

“Dedicated open space” refers to land that is considered likely to remain undeveloped for perpetuity. This designation might result from ownership (such as the State of Connecticut or a land trust), deeds, or use. Public access is generally allowed.

“Managed open space” refers to land that may not remain undeveloped in perpetuity. This designation might result from ownership (such as a sportsmen’s club or a water company) or use. Public access may not be allowed.

## A Variety of Land Uses ...

The City is a mature, developed community with the general land use pattern well established. Overall, about 97 percent of all land in Groton has been developed for residential, business, or industrial purposes, or committed to a specific use such as open space or municipal use. Within this total, some parcels may have potential for additional development in the future.

2006 Groton City Land Use	Acres	Acres	Percent
<b>Residential</b>		<b>712</b>	<b>36%</b>
• Single-Family Residential	443		
• 2- or 3-Family Residential	74		
• Multi-Family Residential	184		
• Other (Boarding, Multi-house)	10		
<b>Business</b>		<b>336</b>	<b>17%</b>
• Industrial	275		
• Business	28		
• Marine Commercial	19		
• Other (Office, Marine, Mixed)	14		
<b>Open Space</b>		<b>339</b>	<b>17%</b>
Dedicated Open Space	176		
Managed Open Space	163		
<b>Institutional</b>		<b>178</b>	<b>9%</b>
Community Facilities	90		
Institutional Uses	87		
<b>Other Uses</b>		<b>372</b>	<b>19%</b>
Roads / Right of Way	313		
Parking Lots	50		
Utility / Water	9		
<b>Developed / Committed</b>		<b>1,937</b>	<b>97%</b>
Vacant / Remaining Potential		65	3%
<b>Total Area</b>		<b>2,001</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Totals may not add due to rounding.*

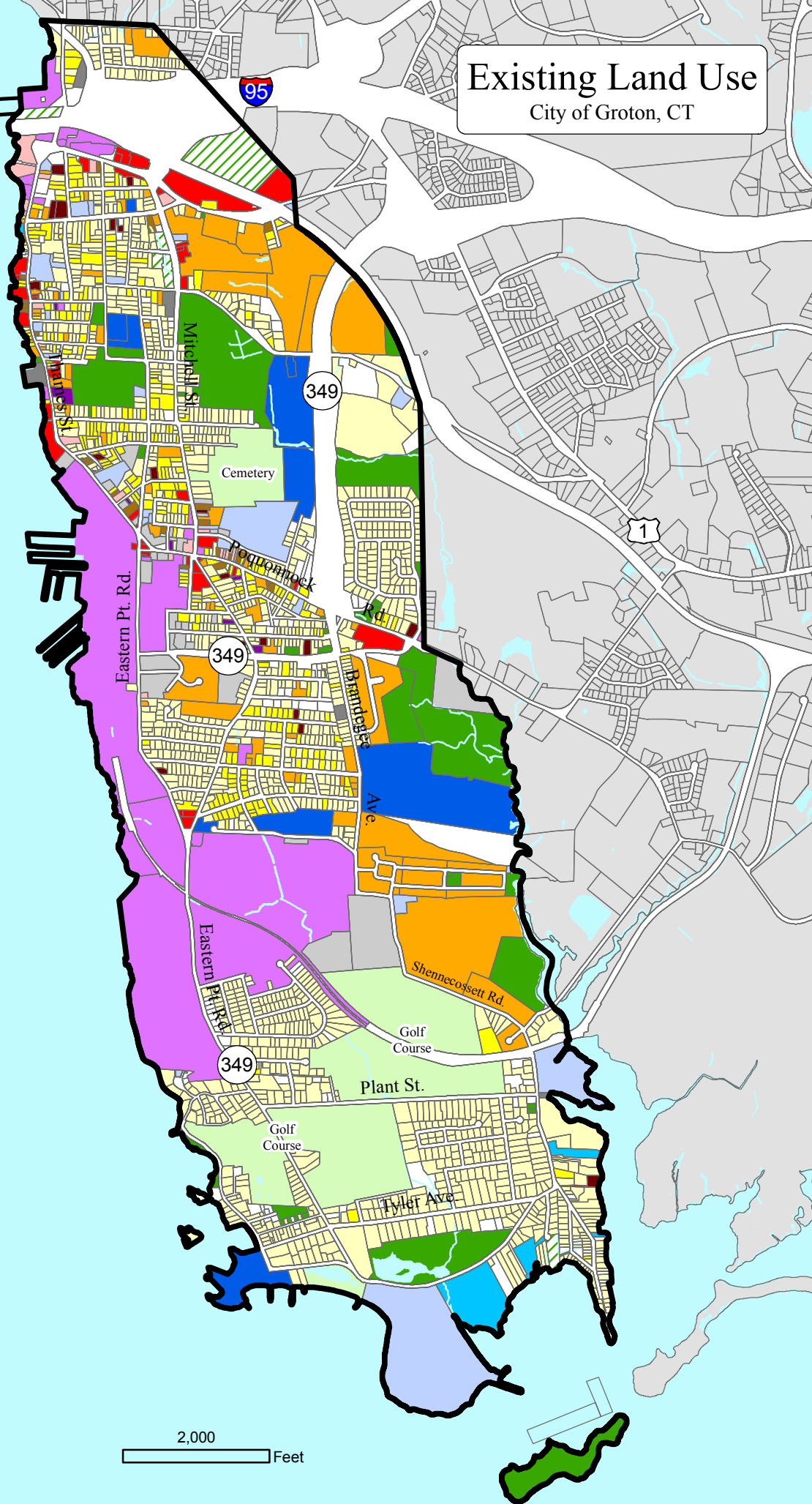
# Existing Land Use

City of Groton, CT



## Legend

- Single Family Development
- 2-3 Family Development
- Multi-Family Development
- Multi Houses
- Boarding Houses
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Commercial Office
- Marine Commercial
- Industrial
- Dedicated Open Space
- Managed Open Space
- Cemetery
- Other Public Land
- Community Facility
- Institutional
- Parking Lot
- Utility
- Vacant
- Water



**Planimetrics**  
31 Ensign Drive, Avon, CT 06001 860-677-5267

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Feet



## A Variety of Zones ...

While much of the City of Groton is zoned “Residential”, the City also has a variety of areas zoned for multi-family residential, industrial, and open space uses.

<b>2006 Groton City Zoning</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Residential</b>		<b>952</b>	<b>48%</b>
• R-12 Residence			
o Primarily single-family with 12,000 SF minimum lot size	55		
• R-8 Residence			
o Primarily single-family with 8,000 SF minimum lot size	314		
• R-5.1 Residence			
o Primarily single-family with 5,000 SF minimum lot size	229		
• R-5.2 Residence			
o Single-family with 5,000 SF minimum lot size	356		
o Two-family dwellings allowed with 5,000 SF of lot area per unit			
<b>Multi-Family Residential</b>		<b>248</b>	<b>12%</b>
• Residence Multi-Family	248		
<b>Business</b>		<b>494</b>	<b>25%</b>
• General Industrial	250		
• Restricted Industrial	128		
• General Commercial	88		
• Waterfront Business Residence	28		
<b>Recreation Open Space</b>		<b>308</b>	<b>15%</b>
Recreation Open Space	308		
<b>Total Area</b>		<b>2,001</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Totals may not add due to rounding.*

# Zoning Map

City of Groton, CT



## Legend

### City Zones

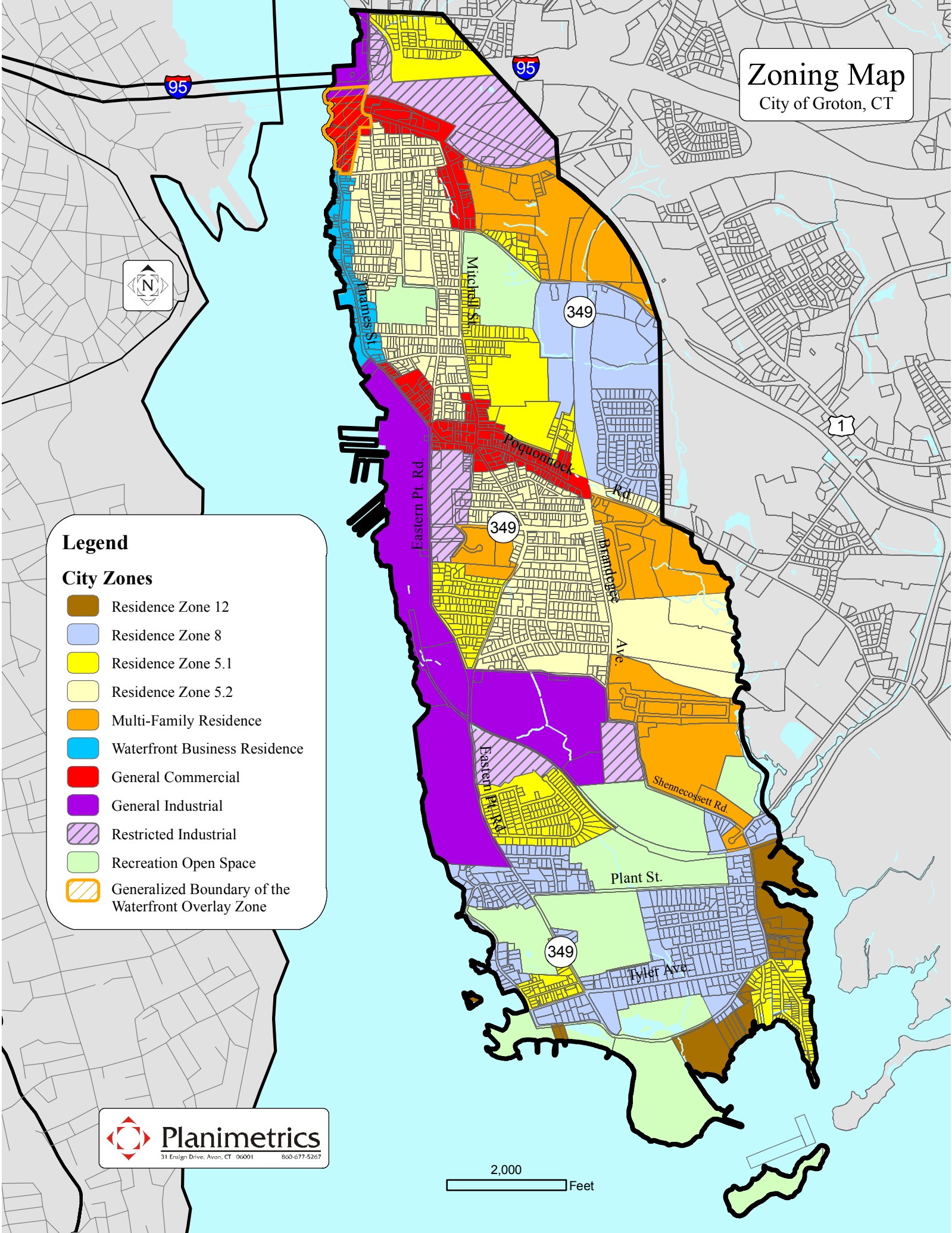
- Residence Zone 12
- Residence Zone 8
- Residence Zone 5.1
- Residence Zone 5.2
- Multi-Family Residence
- Waterfront Business Residence
- General Commercial
- General Industrial
- Restricted Industrial
- Recreation Open Space
- Generalized Boundary of the Waterfront Overlay Zone



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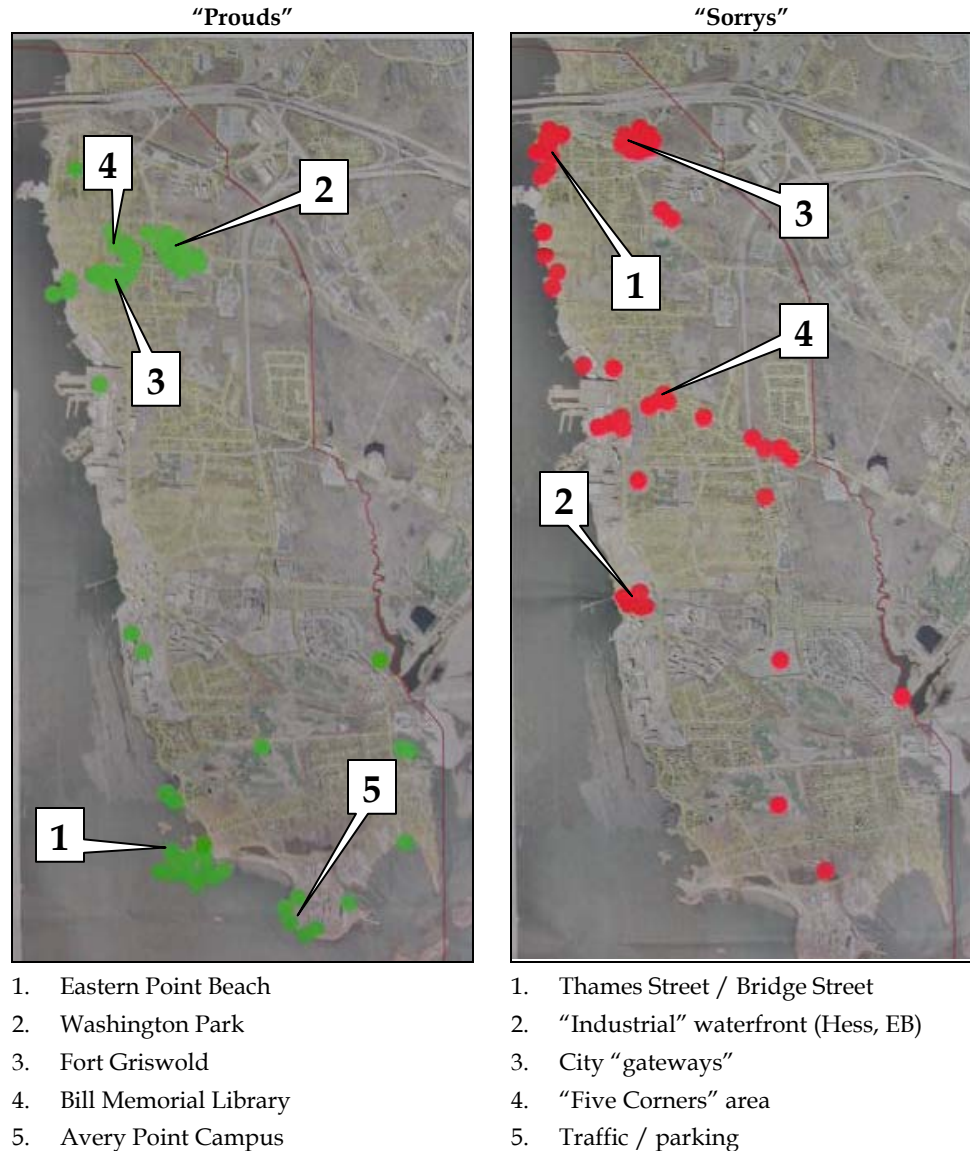
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## ... With Some “Prouds” and “Sorrys” ...

During a public meeting at the start of the planning process, residents identified things they were “proud of” and “sorry about” in the City of Groton. “Prouds” tended to reflect community facilities and local landmarks which reinforce people’s sense of place. On the other hand, “sorrys” tended to reflect areas or issues where residents wish more could be done to enhance the overall character and sense of place in the City.



# STRATEGIC VISION

# 2



Based on community input and the insight of the POCD Update Steering Committee, the following strategic themes were developed for the 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development:

**Conservation**



**Development**



**Infrastructure**



## Conservation-Related Topics

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### **Protect Natural Resources**

- Continue to protect resources
- Protect water quality locally and regionally

### **Preserve Open Space**

- Preserve more open space
- Continue efforts to obtain coastal access

### **Protect Other Resources**

- Protect historic resources
- Protect scenic resources

## **Development-Related Topics**

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### **Guide Overall Development**

- Establish mixed-use nodes
- Enhance community appearance

### **Guide Business Development**

- Continue to promote economic development
- Consider revising regulations
- Consider establishing a development agency
- Address water-related uses

### **Manage Residential Development**

- Protect existing residential neighborhoods
- Continue to address housing needs
- Consider revising regulations

## **Infrastructure-Related Topics**

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### **Address Community Facility Needs**

- Address overall municipal needs
- Continue to address recreation needs
- Support and monitor other services

### **Address Transportation Needs**

- Address vehicular transportation
- Address pedestrian/bicycle transportation
- Address other transportation

### **Address Utility Needs**

- Manage piped utility systems
- Manage wired utility systems
- Address wireless services

# PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES



# 3

Natural resources, which are considered to include coastal resources, contribute to environmental health and overall community character in the City. The overall goal is to continue to protect natural resources.

*Continue to protect natural resources.*

## Continue To Protect Resources

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The following types of resources perform a variety of important environmental functions in the City and should continue to be protected:

- watercourses (drainage, water quality, etc.),
- tidal / inland wetlands (water quality, habitat, flood control, etc.),
- steep slopes (erosion potential, etc.),
- coastal / inland floodplains (flood control, public safety, etc.).

The City should continue requiring setbacks and buffers to separate development activities from water resources and coastal resources. While large setbacks will not always be possible, even small setbacks would be of benefit in areas with little or no protection currently.

In addition, the City should seek to minimize new development in coastal "V" flood zones (areas in which structures are subject to potential wave damage during coastal storms). With increasing concern over global climate change and sea level rise, policies that encourage upland development and a gradual retreat from the vulnerable low lying waterfront make good sense and good public policy.

The Conservation Commission / Inland Wetlands Agency should continue to be considered as the lead agency for coordinating the protection of natural resources in the City.



### Search Terms

"Watercourse"  
"Inland Wetland"  
"Tidal Wetland"  
"Floodplain"  
"V Flood Zone"



## Best Management Practices

---

“Best management practices” are techniques which are considered to be “state of the art” in addressing important issues (such as environmental protection).

Examples of “best management practices” for protecting water quality can be found on the internet, such as:

[www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/](http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/)

[www.longislandsoundstudy.net/](http://www.longislandsoundstudy.net/)



### Search Terms

“Water Quality”  
“Water Quality Best  
Management Practices”

## Protect Water Quality

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Protection of water quality is, and will continue to be, an important natural resource priority in the City.

The fact that shellfish beds in and around the City are occasionally closed due to pollution from runoff is an indication that more can and should be done to protect water quality. The New London-Groton area is specifically identified as priority areas for management in the federally-approved Section 6217 Coastal Non-point Pollution Management Program for Connecticut.

Specific actions to address water quality could include:

- educational programs and materials to inform residents of the importance of hazardous waste disposal, the impact of pesticides and lawn chemicals, and similar issues.
- continued support of the development and eventual implementation of the Drinking Water Quality Management Plan as well as support of regional approaches and regional best management practices designed to protect the watershed that drains into the reservoir.
- encouraging or requiring the removal of underground fuel oil storage tanks.
- incorporating “best management practices” for stormwater (such as vegetative buffers) in the City’s zoning regulations.
- regular street sweeping and drainage maintenance (including trapping, removing, and suitably disposing of sediment from storm drains).



## Protect Natural Diversity Resources

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Some areas in the City are identified in the Connecticut Natural Diversity Database - a list of areas which may contain endangered species, unique habitats, or scenic resources. This database is maintained by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

When development or other activities are proposed in these areas, the applicant and/or the City should contact DEP for additional information so that the resource can be protected.

The City should also consider ways to prevent the introduction of non-native species and diminish the presence of invasive species in the City, especially as part of new development applications.

**Natural Diversity**



**Floodplain Management**



**Responsibility Legend**

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
<b>CWC</b>	Conservation / Wetlands Comm.
<b>DEP</b>	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
<b>DOT</b>	Connecticut Department of Transportation
<b>EPHD</b>	Eastern Point Historic District Comm.
<b>GUC</b>	Groton Utilities Commission
<b>HMC</b>	Harbor Management Commission
<b>PZC</b>	Planning and Zoning Commission
<b>Staff</b>	City of Groton Staff
<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

**Priorities Legend (Tasks)**

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

**Strategies****Protect Important Resources**






	Who	Priority
1. Continue to protect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• watercourses,</li> <li>• tidal wetlands and inland wetlands,</li> <li>• steep slopes (&gt;15 percent), and</li> <li>• coastal and inland floodplains.</li> </ul>	CWC PZC Staff	
2. To reduce the pressure on natural resources, consider requiring the deduction of wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes (> 20%), and floodplains from parcel area when determining residential density for multi-family developments.	CWC PZC Staff	<b>2</b>
3. Consider adopting the model wetlands regulations developed by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.	CWC Staff	<b>1</b>
4. Maintain an "upland review area" adjacent to wetlands and watercourses but consider placing this standard in the definition of regulated activity (currently in definition of significant activity).	CWZ Staff	<b>1</b>
5. Continue to require use of vegetated buffers to protect water resources from runoff, erosion, and other potential adverse impacts.	CWC PZC	
6. Work with state and federal agencies to ensure that flood protection regulations reflect current thinking and standards, especially with regard to long-term rise in sea levels.	PZC Staff	
7. Continue to consider the Conservation Commission / Inland Wetlands Agency as the lead agency for coordinating the protection of natural resources in the City.		

# Natural Resources

City of Groton, CT



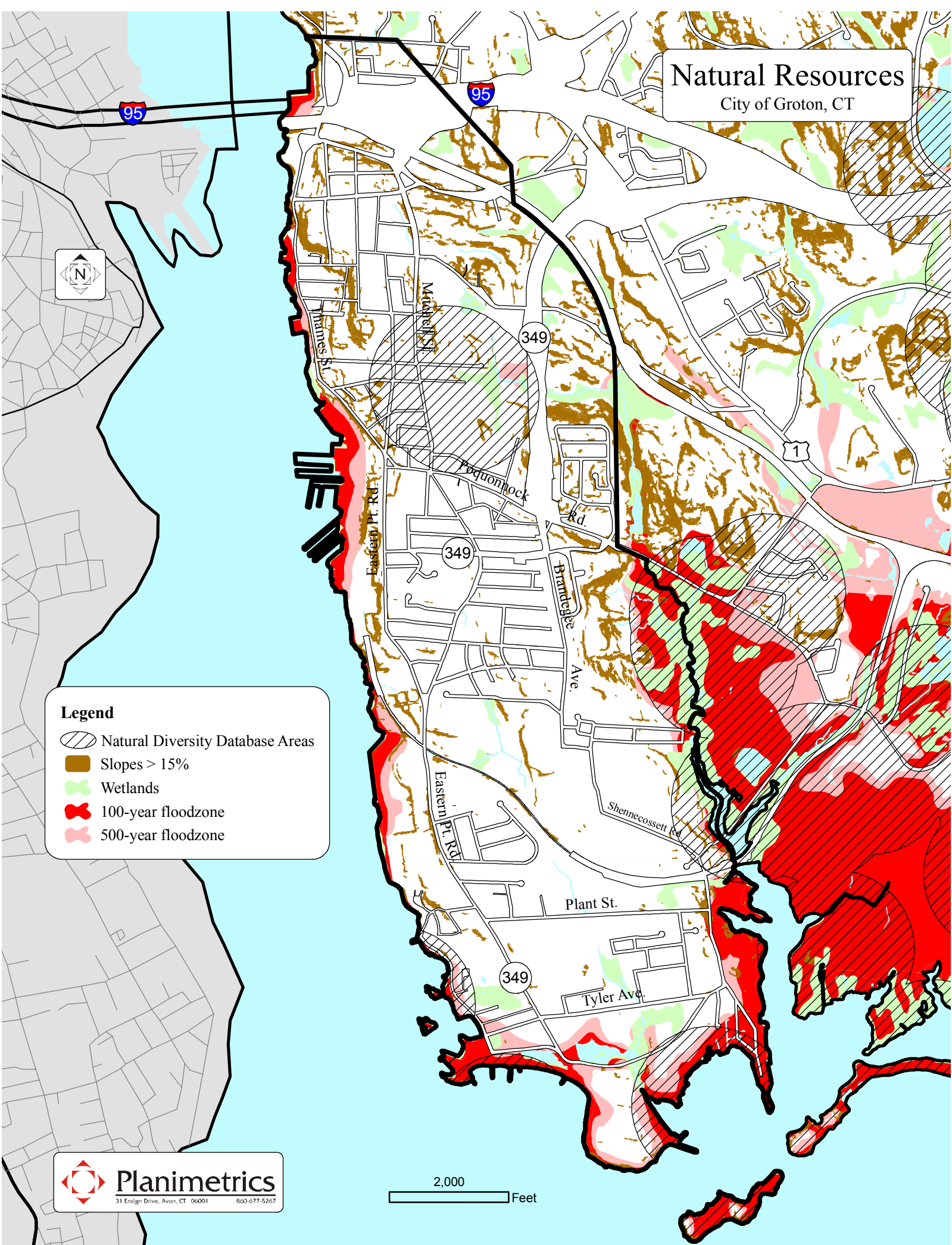
## Legend

-  Natural Diversity Database Areas
-  Slopes > 15%
-  Wetlands
-  100-year floodzone
-  500-year floodzone



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31 Ensign Drive, Avon, CT 06001  
603-677-5267

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**Responsibility Legend**

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
<b>CWC</b>	Conservation / Wetlands Comm.
<b>DEP</b>	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
<b>DOT</b>	Connecticut Department of Transportation
<b>EPHD</b>	Eastern Point Historic District Comm.
<b>GUC</b>	Groton Utilities Commission
<b>HMC</b>	Harbor Management Commission
<b>PZC</b>	Planning and Zoning Commission
<b>Staff</b>	City of Groton Staff
<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

**Priorities Legend (Tasks)**

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

**Protect Water Quality**

	Who	Priority
8. Continue efforts to protect and improve water quality through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>educational programs and materials.</li> <li>development and implementation of the Drinking Water Quality Management Plan.</li> <li>removing residential underground fuel oil storage tanks.</li> <li>incorporating "best management practices" in regulations.</li> <li>regular street sweeping and drainage maintenance.</li> </ul>	GUC CWC Staff	
9. Encourage the use of "best management practices" to treat stormwater for all new or substantially improved development.	Staff	
10. Inventory existing storm drain outfalls to identify opportunities to retrofit roads and other municipal facilities for stormwater retention and pollutant reduction.	Staff	<b>3</b>
11. Consider ways to enhance existing soil erosion and sediment control regulations and oversight of land disturbance.	PZC Staff	<b>3</b>
12. Require proper stormwater management in new development and the retrofitting of existing stormwater systems during redevelopment to minimize potential adverse impacts to wetlands and water quality.	PZC CWC Staff	<b>2</b>
13. Continue to encourage "best management practices" and "Clean Marina" certification from CTDEP for all marinas and boating facilities in the City, particularly in Pine Island Bay and Bakers Cove, which contain state-leased shellfish beds and significant shellfish resources.	HMC DEP Staff	
14. Implement the Harbor Management Plan since it allows the City to better control in-water activities (such as docks and moorings) and helps ensure in-water and upland activities are better coordinated.	HMC CC	<b>1</b>
15. Continue to discourage discharge of pollutants into the storm drainage system.	PZC CWC Staff	

**Protect Natural Diversity Resources**

	Who	Priority
16. Consider adopting procedures to help protect areas identified in the Connecticut Natural Diversity Database.	DEP	
17. Seek to prevent the introduction of non-native species and diminish the presence of invasive species.	CWC PZC Staff	

# PRESERVE OPEN SPACE

# 4



The preservation of open space is a significant element of the Plan because of the importance that residents place on it. The overall goal is to continue to preserve open space to preserve important resources, enhance community character, and augment the quality of life in the City.

*Continue to preserve open space to preserve important resources, enhance community character, and augment the quality of life in the community.*

## Preserve Open Space

The major open space priority of the City for the foreseeable future is to interconnect existing open space areas and establish multi-use paths and sidewalks that link different areas of the City together. The value of the open space system in the City will be magnified if it becomes possible to travel among them by a pathway system.

### Open Space Definition

For the Plan, “open space” is defined as land permanently preserved from development and committed in perpetuity for conservation, passive recreation (such as trails), or preservation of community character.

Note that active recreation fields and areas are addressed in the Community Facilities section of the Plan.

Boardwalk Pathway



George Washington Park



**Open Space Inventory**

<b>City-Owned</b>	<b>Acres</b>
George Wash- ington Park	32.9
Birch Plain	13.9
Creek Park	
Eastern Point Beach	10.8
Slocomb Trail Parklet	1.1
Madison Place Park	1.0
Constitution Place Park	0.7
Flasher Mem. / Wall of Honor	within ROW
<b>Total City</b>	<b>60.4</b>
<b>Town-Owned</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Shennecossett Golf Course	133.5
<b>Total Town</b>	<b>133.5</b>
<b>State-Owned</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Fort Griswold State Park	15.1
Kenneth Streeter Boat Launch	1.7
Bayberry Lane Boat Launch	1.6
<b>Total State</b>	<b>18.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>212.3 acres</b>

The Open Space Plan identifies the following areas:

Existing Open Space includes state, municipal, and private lands that are currently preserved as open space (dedicated open space) or used for open space-type purposes (managed open space) or are community facility uses that are complementary to open spaces.

Desirable Open Space includes areas along Birch Plain Creek and other areas that are desirable to preserve as open space due to their overall scenic and/or resource value to the community and/or their proximity to existing open space areas in the City or the Town.

Open Space Connections illustrates existing and potential open space connections in the City.

The preferred method of preserving open space in the City will be through ownership by a public entity (such as the City of Groton, the Town of Groton, or the State of Connecticut) or a conservation organization (such as the Avalonia Land Conservancy or The Nature Conservancy). This method will also ensure that public access is provided, when and where appropriate.

Conservation easements and ownership by homeowner associations are not encouraged for preserving open space (since they typically do not allow for public access) but can be used for protection of sensitive natural resources or scenic views.

During the planning period, the City of Groton should strive to increase the amount of permanently dedicated open space in order to provide benefits to the residents, the environment, and the quality of life in the City.

It would be advantageous if the City was prepared to purchase open space property (or development rights) when desirable open space properties become available, especially those that will interconnect existing open spaces into a pathway trail system (containing a mix of sidewalks, trails, and paths - both on-street and off-street).

For example, for several decades, the Town of Groton and the City of Groton have been seeking to establish a "greenbreak" along Birch Plain Creek. For the Town, this is part of what they refer to as the "western greenbreak." This concept has most recently been expressed in the City's 1996 Plan of Conservation and Development and the Town's 2001 Plan of Conservation and Development. From both perspectives, the Birch Plain Creek corridor provides an important opportunity to interconnect pathways in both communities and regionally.



# Open Space Plan

City of Groton, CT



## Legend

### Existing Open Space

- Dedicated Open Space
- Managed Open Space
- Other Public Land
- Community Facility
- State Facility

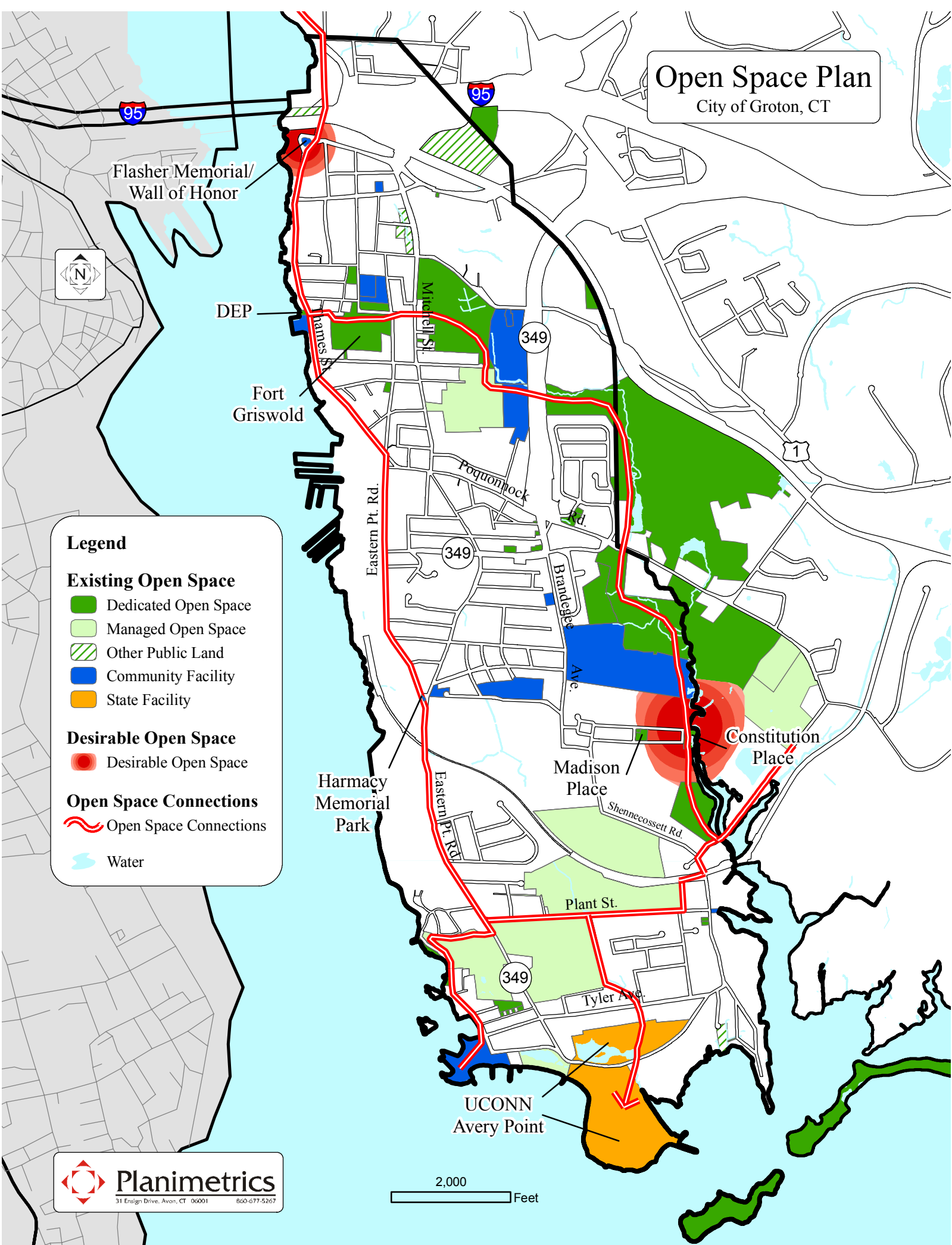
### Desirable Open Space

- Desirable Open Space

### Open Space Connections

- Open Space Connections

Water





To help preserve open space, the City should seek to enhance the existing Open Space Fund in order to provide the resources to acquire important open space parcels when they become available. The first step would be to establish an annual line item in the budget for open space protection. State statutes allow a community to set aside up to two mills each year for the Open Space Fund.

Some communities (such as the Town of Groton) have authorized a bond issue to immediately fund such a program (with the bond being paid off over 20 years). The City of Groton should consider such a program as well.

## **Preserve and Enhance Coastal Access**

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### **Search Terms**

"Coastal Access"  
"Coastal Management"

The City is fortunate to offer a variety of public access attractions ranging from the urban waterfront along Thames Street, with its sweeping view of the lower Thames River, to swimming at Eastern Point Beach, to harbor and wetland viewing at Bakers Cove and Birch Plain Creek.

The City can build on its past efforts and these existing attractions in part, by anticipating future development, particularly along the Thames River waterfront. Some longstanding uses in this area do not require a waterfront location (they are not considered to be a water-dependent use) and the provision of some type of waterfront access can be anticipated as part of any future development in this area. In recognition of its industrial waterfront, the City wants to promote balanced development of the coastal area to ensure full utilization of that area while increasing and enhancing water access, recreational opportunities, and water dependent uses.

In addition, public access to coastal beach resources, always in high demand, is somewhat limited by geology and existing patterns of development and ownership.

The City should strive to provide public access to the coastal areas whenever possible and appropriate.

## Strategies

### Preserve Open Space

	Who	Priority				
1. Continue work towards establishing an overall linked pathway system in the City with walkways and bikeways.	PZC BPC CC TOG Staff	1				
2. Work with the Town of Groton to create an open space corridor along Birch Plain Creek (called the Birch Plain “greenbreak”) and add land to the existing Birch Plain Creek Park.	PZC CC TOG BPC Staff	1				
3. Strive over the long term to establish a waterfront pathway network in the City that will take advantage of the shoreline on the Thames River and Fisher Island Sound.	PZC CC DEP Staff	3				
<table><tr><td>First Choice</td><td>Make provision for a linear pathway along the waterfront</td></tr><tr><td>Second Choice</td><td>Make provision for lateral connections to the waterfront and for a linear pathway parallel to the waterfront such as along the street (e.g. – the Thames Street area)</td></tr></table>			First Choice	Make provision for a linear pathway along the waterfront	Second Choice	Make provision for lateral connections to the waterfront and for a linear pathway parallel to the waterfront such as along the street (e.g. – the Thames Street area)
First Choice	Make provision for a linear pathway along the waterfront					
Second Choice	Make provision for lateral connections to the waterfront and for a linear pathway parallel to the waterfront such as along the street (e.g. – the Thames Street area)					
4. To help enhance public access to the Thames River, consider establishing a formal program to purchase strategically located waterfront parcels as they become available for open space or other municipal purposes.	CC DEP	3				
5. Seek to identify and preserve any areas which are potentially high in passive recreational potential (including beaches, coastal bluffs and escarpments, tidal wetlands, or islands) as open space and as part of the overall pathway system.	BPC CWC DEP Staff	1				
6. Support the Open Space Fund with an annual contribution from the City Budget so desirable land can be purchased when it becomes available.	CC	2				
7. Modify the open space provisions in the subdivision regulations (Section 4.4) to require (currently says “may”) that <u>every</u> residential subdivision make some provision for open space through: a. deeding at least 10 percent of the parcel area for open space or other public purposes, or b. making a payment of a fee in lieu of open space under certain conditions (as provided in Section 4.4.1 of the Subdivision Regulations).	PZC Staff	1				
8. Consider extending the open space set-aside requirement (and fee-in-lieu-of open space provisions) to multi-family and other types of residential development.	PZC Staff	1				

### Responsibility Legend

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
<b>CWC</b>	Conservation / Wetlands Comm.
<b>DEP</b>	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
<b>DOT</b>	Connecticut Department of Transportation
<b>EPHD</b>	Eastern Point Historic District Comm.
<b>GUC</b>	Groton Utilities Commission
<b>HMC</b>	Harbor Management Commission
<b>PZC</b>	Planning and Zoning Commission
<b>Staff</b>	City of Groton Staff
<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

### Priorities Legend (Tasks)

<b>1</b>	High Priority
<b>2</b>	Moderate Priority
<b>3</b>	Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

**Responsibility Legend**

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
<b>CWC</b>	Conservation / Wetlands Comm.
<b>DEP</b>	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
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<b>PZC</b>	Planning and Zoning Commission
<b>Staff</b>	City of Groton Staff
<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

**Preserve and Enhance Coastal Access**

	Who	Priority
9. In the event of expansion / redevelopment of the industrial Thames River area (generally represented by the existing General Industrial zone), promote such redevelopment so that:	PZC DEP Staff	<b>2</b>
a. non-water dependent uses are located further from the waterfront,		
b. public access and attractions along the waterfront are encouraged and supported, and		
c. scenic views are preserved to the extent possible.		
10. Continue to explore ways to improve and enhance coastal public access in the Thames Street area since some lots may not be conducive to providing for linear access (such as making provision for transferring public access/water-dependent use to another waterfront site).	Staff DEP	

**Priorities Legend (Tasks)**

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

# PROTECT OTHER RESOURCES



# 5

## Protect Historic Resources

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Historic resources contribute to the overall character and quality of life in the City. The overall goal is to continue to protect historic resources.

*Continue to protect historic resources.*

Recognized historic resources within the City include Fort Griswold, the Eastern Point Historic District, and a number of historic properties.

Local historic districts (such as at Eastern Point) provide significant protection to historic resources and character since a local Historic District Commission regulates activities in local districts. The construction or demolition of buildings or structures or the alteration of external architectural features in districts requires a “certificate of appropriateness.”

Listing on a Register of Historic Places is basically ceremonial - it may entitle the owner to place a historic plaque on the property but has little effect on activities of private property owners. Properties and areas listed on the National Register of Historic Places are recognized for their significance in American history. Listings on the State Register of Historic Places are recognized for their significance in Connecticut history. Entries on the National Register are also on the State Register.

Another tool that is available for protection of historic resources is “village district” zoning (as authorized by Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes). This statute enables a zoning commission to develop regulations to protect areas of distinctive landscape or character (it does not have to be a village), an important distinction from a local historic district that must be endorsed by the property owners.

Additional protection can come from adoption of local ordinances to promote historic preservation (such as a demolition delay ordinance which allows time for exploring alternatives to demolition).



### Search Terms

“National Register of  
Historic Places”  
“Connecticut Historical  
Commission”

As shown on the following map, the boundaries of the local historic district and the National Register Historic District differ in the Eastern Point area. This situation can arise since:

- the National designation is largely ceremonial and its primary purpose is to identify significant historic resources, and
- the local designation involves a local ordinance that property owners must vote on and agree to be subjected to.

In other words, the National/State designation may best reflect the location of identified historic resources and the local designation may best reflect the historic areas that have some measure of protection.

Protection of historic resources can also be promoted through education of property owners and other Groton residents about the importance of these resources to community character and overall quality of life.

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**Recognized Historic Resources (City)**

Description		Regulation	Recognition			
		Local Historic District	National Historic Landmark	National Register of Historic Places	State Register of Historic Places	Local Recognition
<b>Existing Districts</b>	Eastern Point Local Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Eastern Point National Register Historic District			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Groton Bank National Register Historic District			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Recognized Places</b>	Fort Griswold		Poten- tial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Branford House			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	New London Ledge Lighthouse			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Avery Point Lighthouse			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Other Areas</b>	National Register Historic District (Eastern Point)					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	National Register Historic District (Avery Point)					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	National Register Historic District (Fort Griswold)					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Electric Boat Corporation Shipyard		Poten- tial			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

# Historic Resources

City of Groton, CT

## Legend

- ★ National Register Historic Places
- Local Historic District
- National Register Historic Districts
- Potential National Historic Districts



## Protect Scenic Resources

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The City of Groton is fortunate to contain many significant scenic features. These scenic resources contribute to community character in Groton and should be protected and preserved.

*Continue to protect scenic resources.*

Scenic resources include areas (scenic areas that are viewed from elsewhere), and vistas (locations affording scenic views from them). Areas with a “sense of place” (areas with an identifiable focal point, defined edges, a strong structure, and an engaging character) are also considered to be scenic and should be enhanced. Some major scenic resources are located on the map on the facing page. These (and other) scenic resources should be preserved.

While preserving identified scenic views will help in specific areas, the underground placement of wired utilities will produce scenic benefits City-wide and should be pursued.

The City may wish to consider establishing design review guidelines for certain areas within the community (such as Thames Street), especially if this area is to be designated as a “village district” in order to preserve and enhance the “sense of place: and overall character of this area.

**New London Ledge Lighthouse**



**Thames River Waterfront**






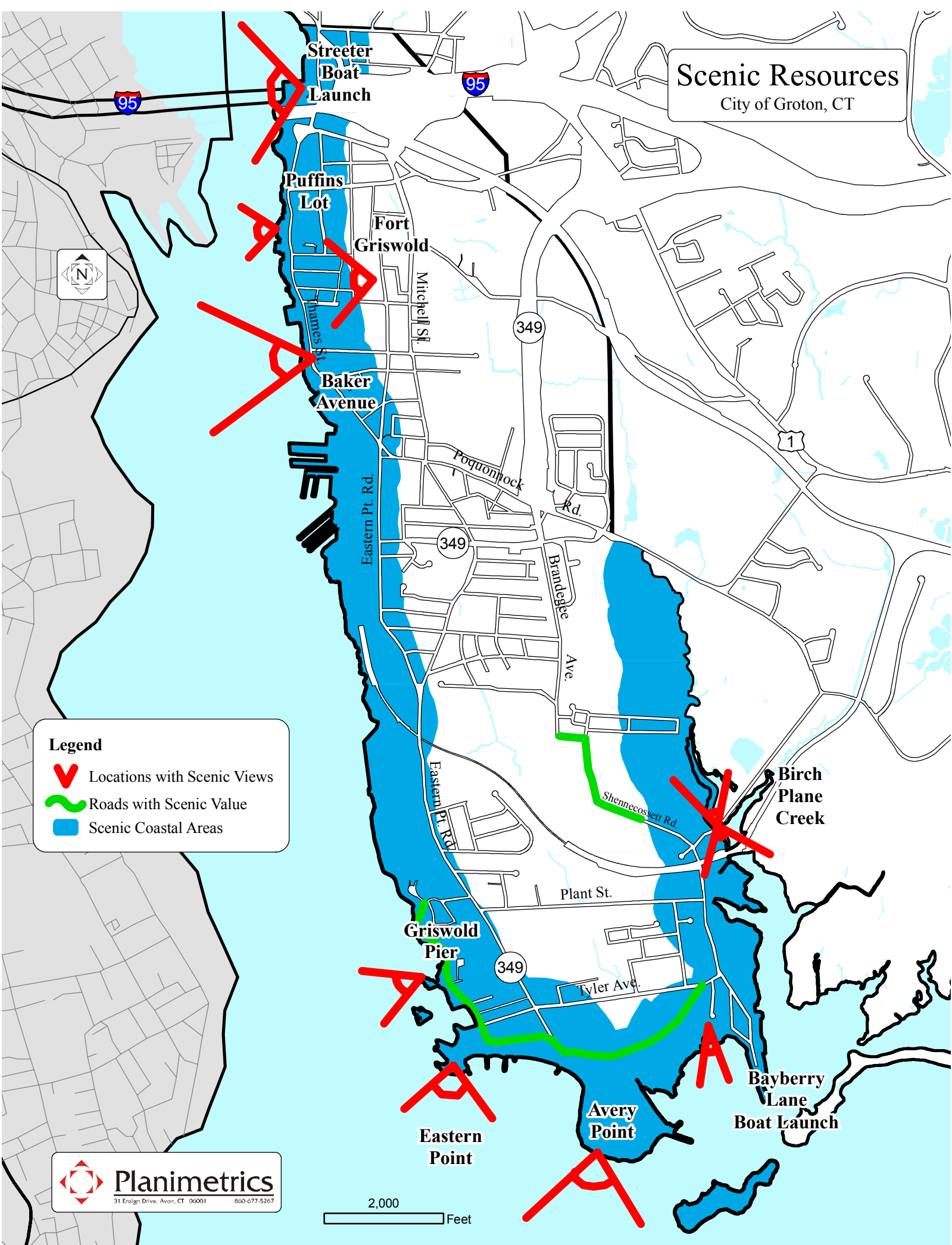
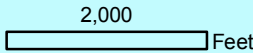


# Scenic Resources

City of Groton, CT

**Legend**

-  Locations with Scenic Views
-  Roads with Scenic Value
-  Scenic Coastal Areas



**Responsibility Legend**

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
<b>CWC</b>	Conservation / Wetlands Comm.
<b>DEP</b>	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
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<b>PZC</b>	Planning and Zoning Commission
<b>Staff</b>	City of Groton Staff
<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

**Priorities Legend (Tasks)**

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

**Strategies****Protect Historic Resources**

	Who	Priority
1. Continue to encourage preservation of historic resources that exist in the City.	Staff	
2. Support the flexible application of land use regulations and the building code where this will preserve a historic property and not endanger the public health, safety, and welfare.	Staff	
3. Along with the Town of Groton, continue to support implementation of the recommendations of the 1996 Historic Preservation Plan, as appropriate, including nominating sites in the City for state or federal recognition.	PZC Staff EPHC	
4. Consider adopting ordinances to provide for demolition delay and/or tax abatement, when appropriate, for preserving historic properties.	EPHC PZC	<b>2</b>
5. Encourage the efforts of local organizations (such as the Friends of Fort Griswold, Groton Bank Historic Association, Groton Historical Society) that promote historic preservation.	Staff EPHD	
6. Support nomination of Fort Griswold for National Historic Landmark status.	CC	<b>1</b>
7. Support nomination of Electric Boat Shipyard for National Historic Landmark status.	CC	<b>3</b>
8. Advocate at the State level for more funding for Fort Griswold.	CC	<b>1</b>

**Protect Scenic Resources**

	Who	Priority
9. Modify the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to encourage the preservation and protection of identified scenic views and resources.	PZC Staff	<b>2</b>
10. Encourage development that contributes to "sense of place", such as through establishing design review guidelines for certain areas within the community (such as Thames Street).	PZC Staff	
11. Consider expanding street tree planting programs and recommend trees appropriate for each area (since tall-growing trees are not appropriate under overhead wires and flowering or fruit-bearing trees may not be appropriate in some locations).	Staff	
12. Encourage maintenance of street-side areas.	Staff	

# GUIDE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT

# 6



Community form is an important consideration in the Plan since studies have found that physical organization and design enhances community character and quality of life. At a community meeting held at the beginning of the planning process, the concept of preserving and enhancing the overall character of the City was the highest rated goal of those people that attended. It is a goal of this Plan to guide development within the City to support strong neighborhoods and areas with a “sense of place”.

These efforts are related to “branding” the City of Groton as a special place. Using the physical configuration of the City to reinforce the activities occurring in the City and the experiences of residents and visitors has the potential to pay dividends in the long run.

*Guide overall development to enhance character and “sense of place”.*

“Gateway” Signage



Mixed Use Node



## **Village Districts**

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A village-type zoning district differs from a typical zoning district in that the statutes specifically provide that aesthetic issues may be considered. Such a district could include architectural and other design guidelines in order to ensure that new development is consistent with the overall vision for these areas as compact pedestrian friendly areas.

In a village-type zoning district, a zoning commission can (when in view from public roadways) regulate:

- the design and placement of buildings,
- the maintenance of public views,
- the design, paving materials and placement of public roadways,
- other elements relevant to maintaining and protecting the character of the village district.

Prior to doing this, however, the zoning commission must retain a village district consultant to review and make recommendations for such applications. The village district consultant must be:

- an architect or an architectural firm,
- a landscape architect,
- a planner who is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, or
- an architectural review board (if configured per CGS 8-2j).

## **Establish Mixed-Use Nodes**

---

The City should encourage the development and enhancement of vibrant, mixed use nodes with a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere at appropriate places within the community. The intent is to encourage the development of the areas as strong focal points and attractions for residents, employees, and visitors.

The areas that seem to present the best opportunities for development of mixed use nodes are:

- Thames Street
- Five Corners

## **Undertake Additional Planning**

While much work has been done to date in these areas, additional planning may need to be done during the planning period in order to promote compact and "pedestrian scale" mixed use nodes appropriate to each area. These efforts may include:

- additional design work to establish the overall concept of these areas,
- programs to provide financial assistance to property owners who will upgrade their properties and implement designs that are orientated toward pedestrians, and
- strategies to help establish shared parking areas as a means of increasing density and diversity of uses (since studies of parking needs in mixed-use areas has found that fewer parking spaces are needed for the floor area that exists).

## **Establish Appropriate Zoning**

Since overall configuration and design is so important to creating a pedestrian-friendly area, the City should consider establishing new zoning districts for each area. This could include a design-focused regulation or other special regulation or a "village district".

The Connecticut General Statutes (CGS Section 8-2j) specifically provide that a zoning commission may establish a village district "in areas of distinctive character, landscape or historic value that are specifically identified in the plan of conservation and development of the municipality".

While the Waterfront Business Residence (WBR) zone provides a good framework for conversion to a village-type zoning district in the Thames Street / Bridge Street area, the General Commercial (GC) zone at the Five Corners does not.

The Plan recommends that a new zoning district be considered for the Five Corners area. A new zoning district should encourage housing on upper floors of mixed-use buildings and around the core of the mixed use node. The new zoning district should not allow for drive-through type establishments or for parking lots and garages as a principal use (since it is intended to be a pedestrian friendly area). In addition, the new district should not allow for community residential counseling facilities or half-way houses.

<p>If the City elects to establish a “village district” (or a similar design-focused regulation) in the Thames Street / Bridge Street area and the Five Corners area, the following distinguishing characteristics are identified:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Distinctive Characteristics of Possible Village Districts (Existing and/or Proposed)</b></p>		
	<b>Thames Street/ Bridge Street</b>	<b>Five Corners</b>
<b>Uses</b>	Mixed use area with a blend of business and residential uses in a village-type setting	
<b>Design Of Structures</b>	Scale, proportions, massing and detailing of proposed buildings consistent with a New England sea-side village	
<b>Relationship Of Structures</b>	Close to the street with parking on-street, to the rear, and/or in nearby parking lots	
<b>Streetscape</b>	Strongly pedestrian oriented (both areas)	
<b>Roadways</b>	One-way or two-way circulation with on-street parking (where possible) and sidewalks	Two-way circulation with on-street parking (where possible) and generous sidewalks
<b>Other Objects In Public View</b>	Consistent with a New England sea-side village	Consistent with a New England sea-side village
<b>Other Comments</b>	<p>Scenic views and vistas should be protected</p> <p>Waterfront access provided and encouraged</p> <p>Preservation of existing buildings in a manner that maintains the historic or distinctive character is encouraged</p> <p>Removal or disruption of historic traditional or significant structures or architectural elements should be discouraged</p>	Scenic views and vistas should be protected where they exist or can be established

### Possible Future Strategies

At some time in the future, the zoning regulations for the WBR zone might be modified to:

- consider eliminating the height bonuses (ZR 3.19-2a.) for lower coverage (<50%) and public access and allowing a taller height "as of right" (limited to 25' now)
- consider eliminating the building width bonuses (ZR 3.19-2b.) for public access and water-related uses and allowing a wider building "as of right" (limited to 40% now)

### **Thames Street**

Thames Street, between Bridge Street and Fort Street, is the historic "heart" of Groton. It was the business core of the City many years ago and the area still contains many 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century structures used as residences or for commercial purposes.

Over the past 30 years, efforts have been applied to upgrading the physical environment of Thames Street (sidewalks, cobble crosswalks, street lights, etc.). The goal was to take advantage of the area's historic resources and waterfront location to attract more visitors and thereby support the improvement of existing buildings and the creation of new businesses. To help implement the overall strategy, the City modified the Zoning Regulations to establish:

- the Waterfront Business Residence (WBR) zone, and
- the Waterfront Overlay (WO) zone (applies to some of the General Commercial areas on Bridge Street).

Still, even with these efforts and programs, the development of Thames Street has not evolved in the ways it was anticipated.

In order to help spur the future development of the Thames Street area, the Plan recommends the following additional changes be considered:

- Consider making Thames Street one-way southbound (between Bridge Street and Eastern Point Road) in order to provide on-street parking and ample sidewalks.
- Post Thames Street for no trucks (except local deliveries) and strictly enforce this prohibition.
- Evaluate how to provide adequate parking and adequate parking flexibility in this area.
- Ensure that zoning promotes pedestrian activity (limited setbacks, pedestrian-oriented signage, and street furniture, as appropriate)
- Modify the Waterfront Business Residence (WBR) zone to:
  - require (rather than just allow) mixed-use buildings
  - remove hotels as a permitted use
  - require a special permit when parking will be a principal use
  - reduce the restrictions so that a full-service restaurant or an eating establishment (but not a pub or bar) can serve alcoholic beverages
  - consider limiting maximum height based on the facade facing Thames Street rather than the average grade on the site
- Evaluate extending the WBR zone designation to replace the General Commercial designations on Bridge Street or merge the two zones into one new zone with height limitations appropriate to each geographic section which are sensitive to the width of the street and proximity to the water.



December 14, 2007

### Thames Street Concept Plan



### **Five Corners**

The commercial area, around the intersection of Poquonnock Road, Mitchell Street, Benham Road, and Chicago Avenue is the largest concentration of commercial land uses in the City; however, the area is underutilized as a retail center as it is dominated by parking lots and small offices.

The most important objective for this area is to convert what now appears and feels like an automobile-oriented area to an area that looks and feels like a pedestrian-oriented village. To help make this happen, new regulations will need to be adopted which are more prescriptive in terms of land uses and how buildings relate to the street and to each other. Rather than having parking lots in front of buildings, the area should have generous sidewalks with shared parking areas located to the rear (or side) of buildings. In addition consideration should be given to making this a four-way intersection, possibly closing off Chicago Avenue.

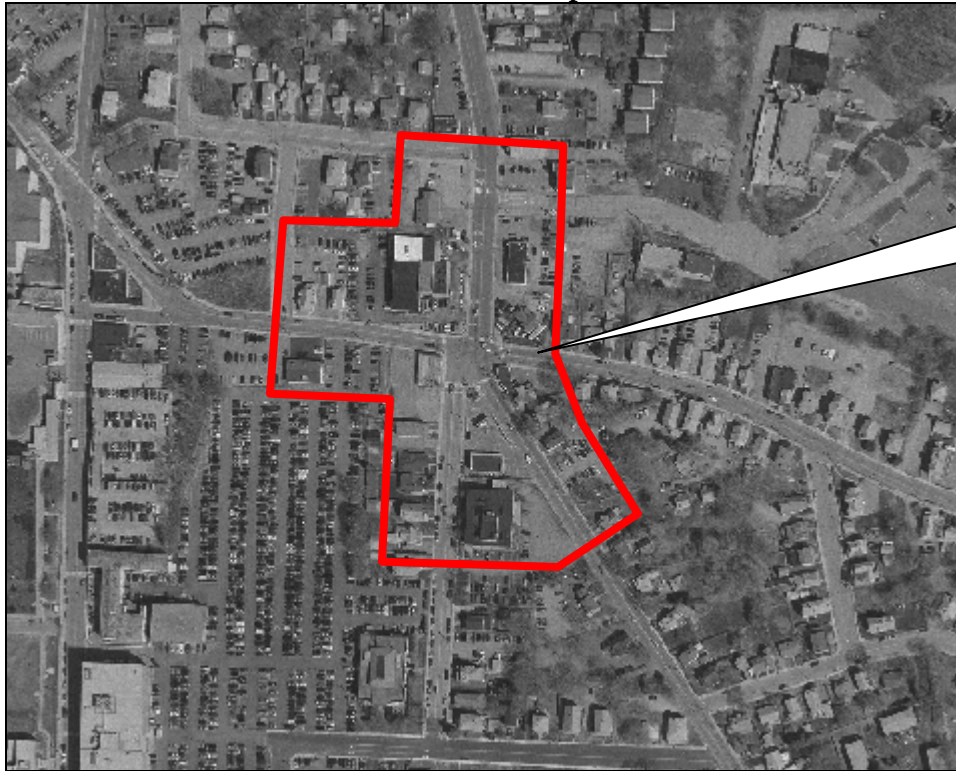
The area around the intersection should be developed more intensively for retail uses to serve the residents of the City as well as Electric Boat employees. This should be the area of concentration of retail development to essentially create a "City Center." There is substantial redevelopment potential in this area with the large amount of land used for parking for Electric Boat employees. More importantly, there is a strong market for this area given the number of City residents and local workers who have indicated they would be willing to frequent such an area.

The focus of efforts in the Five Corners area should be the creation of a concentrated retail center, so retail uses should not be permitted to spread out in a linear fashion over the major roads in the area, particularly into those areas which are predominately residential. The properties along Poquonnock Road east of Benham Road (or possibly High Street) might be rezoned out of the General Commercial zone or a new transitional zone might be established for this area. An exception might be made for a small node of neighborhood business uses at the intersection of Poquonnock Road and Tom Avenue.

Likewise, properties on Mitchell Street north of Hamilton Avenue should be considered for rezoning out of the General Commercial zone.

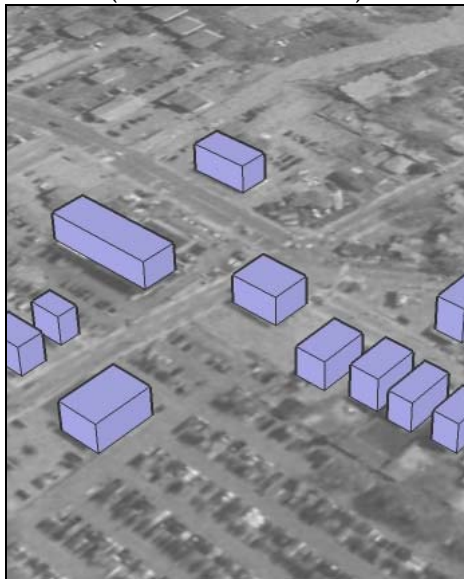
December 14, 2007

### Five Corners Concept Plan



Area suggested  
for establishing a  
pedestrian-  
friendly mixed  
use area

Existing Form  
(Automobile-Oriented)



Possible Form  
(Streetscape-Oriented)



## **Enhance Community Appearance**

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The City of Groton can enhance community character and sense of place by focusing on several efforts:

- enhancing “gateways” (such as at Bridge Street and Clarence B. Sharp Highway),
- promoting “way-finding” to destinations,
- using consistent elements to identify destinations (such as Pfizer, Electric Boat, Avery Point, and Fort Griswold), and
- enhancing streetscapes.

### **Enhance Gateways**

Community character and “sense of place” in the City could be enhanced by improving gateway areas and the associated roadways that people use to enter the City.

Such improvements can be simple (such as signage and landscaping) or more elaborate. In either case, the concept is to reinforce the feeling among residents, employees, and visitors that they have entered a special place. As part of this program, the City should strive to identify a “memorable icon” which will reinforce the overall image of the community.

### **Improve Way Finding**

While residents and employees know where they are going, visitors to the City do not. Extending the “gateway” concept to signage that would guide people to activity centers in the City could be an important part of enhancing community character and sense of place.

The City should establish a program of consistent signage as part of a comprehensive signage program. The program should consider the needs of visitors and trucks (such as designating best truck routes) and should be applied to both State and local roads.

### **Identify Destinations**

In addition to signage for major land uses (such as Pfizer, Electric Boat, Avery Point, and Fort Griswold), these major uses could also be allowed to have additional identification provided it is consistent with the overall “gateway” and “wayfinding” themes established by the City. This would help enhance community character and sense of place. It may also encourage people visiting the City to consider visiting other destinations.

## Enhance Streetscapes

While roads only occupy about 15 percent of the City of Groton's land area, they have a disproportionate impact on the overall impression of the City since roads are the ways that people get around. The following streetscape elements can affect the perception of a community or an area:

### Streetscape Elements

	Description
<b>Sidewalks</b>	Sidewalks should be provided everywhere with sidewalks of generous width encouraged in pedestrian oriented areas such as mixed use nodes
<b>Street Lighting</b>	Pedestrian scale and pedestrian oriented lighting should be promoted in areas intended for pedestrian use since it improves pedestrian safety and adds to the ambience of the area
<b>Street Trees</b>	Street trees should be encouraged since they add to the ambience of an area, provide shade, reduce runoff, soften the urban environment, and provide a sense of protection from the automobile
<b>Street Furniture</b>	Street furniture (benches, fountains, clocks, and similar items) contribute to the interest and identity of pedestrian areas and should be provided if they do not obstruct the sidewalk
<b>Awnings</b>	Awnings can shelter pedestrians, reduce glare, and conserve energy and should be encouraged in pedestrian-oriented areas
<b>Utilities</b>	Underground utilities should be encouraged or required.
<b>Fences And Walls</b>	Fences and walls can detract from the streetscape and ambience of an area if they are opaque or of incompatible materials (chain link) in a pedestrian oriented area.
<b>Property Maintenance</b>	Property maintenance (or lack thereof) can affect community character and quality of life and should be encouraged or required.

**Responsibility Legend**

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
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<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

**Priorities Legend (Tasks)**

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

**Strategies****Establish Mixed Use Nodes - Overall**

	Who	Priority
1. Work towards establishing and nurturing mixed use nodes at Thames Street / Bridge Street and "Five Corners".	PZC Staff	
2. Undertake additional planning of these areas in order to promote compact and "pedestrian scale" mixed use nodes.	PZC Staff	<b>2</b>
3. Consider establishing appropriate zoning in the Thames Street / Bridge Street area by adapting the WBR zoning district.	PZC Staff	<b>1</b>
4. Consider establishing appropriate zoning in the "Five Corners" area by establishing a new village-type zoning district.	PZC Staff	<b>2</b>
5. Ensure that the new zoning districts in the mixed use nodes do not allow for:		
• drive-through type establishments,	PZC Staff	
• parking lots or garages as a principal use (since it is intended to be a pedestrian friendly area), or		
• community residential counseling facilities or halfway houses.		

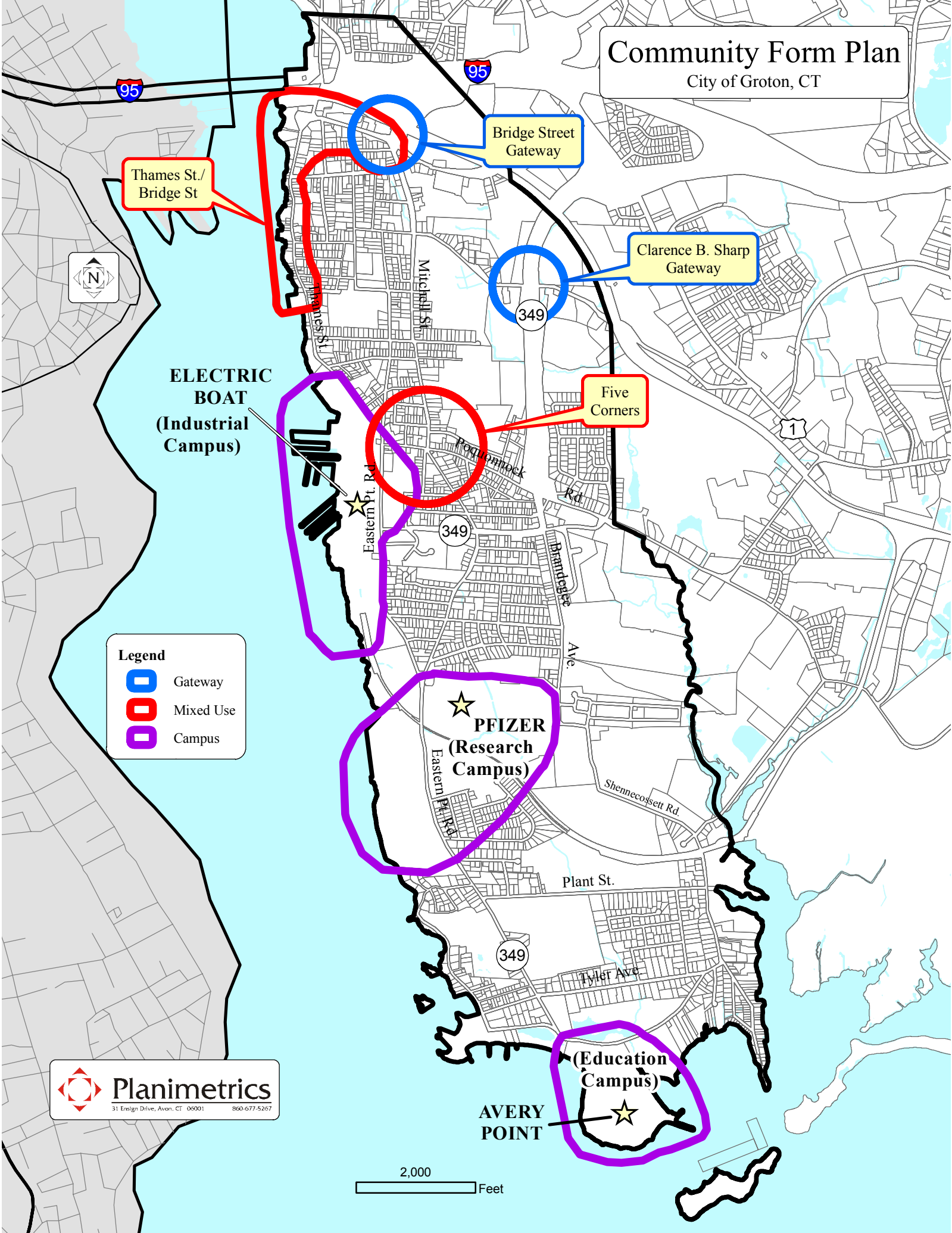
**Establish Mixed Use Nodes - Thames Street**

	Who	Priority
6. Continue to upgrade the physical environment of Thames Street and promote development which is consistent with the historic character and scale of the area.	CC TOG PZC Staff	
7. Address future parking needs in the Thames Street area by:		
• Providing on-street and off-street parking facilities to meet current need and that generated by some new development.		
• Utilizing larger parking areas for visitors outside the Thames Street area (possibly in conjunction with shuttle buses).	PZC Staff	<b>1</b>
• Encourage consideration of parking behind buildings and underneath buildings on the downhill side of the street.		
• Investigating other ways to maximize parking opportunities in the Thames Street area.		
8. Consider initiating a program to acquire strategic parcels in the Thames Street area for public waterfront access and parking.	CC	
9. Consider making Thames Street one-way southbound to provide on-street parking and ample sidewalks.	Staff CC	<b>2</b>
10. Consider modifying the Waterfront Business Residence (WBR) zone to:		
• focus development activity within a core area initially	PZC Staff	<b>2</b>
• allow eating establishment to serve alcoholic beverages		
• relate maximum height to the facade facing Thames Street		
11. Consider extending the WBR zone designation to replace the General Commercial designations on Bridge Street or create a new zone in this area.	PZC Staff	<b>2</b>
12. Review how the street, travel lanes, intersections, and frontage parking areas can be reconfigured to function better and improve aesthetics in the Bridge Street area.	PZC Staff	<b>2</b>



# Community Form Plan

City of Groton, CT



## Legend

-  Gateway
-  Mixed Use
-  Campus



**Planimetrics**

31 Ensign Drive, Avon, CT 06001 860-677-5267

**Responsibility Legend**

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
<b>CWC</b>	Conservation / Wetlands Comm.
<b>DEP</b>	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
<b>DOT</b>	Connecticut Department of Transportation
<b>EPHD</b>	Eastern Point Historic District Comm.
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<b>HMC</b>	Harbor Management Commission
<b>PZC</b>	Planning and Zoning Commission
<b>Staff</b>	City of Groton Staff
<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

**Priorities Legend (Tasks)**

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

**Establish Mixed Use Nodes - Five Corners**

	Who	Priority
13. Seek to establish a strong, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use node at the Five Corners based on zoning regulations which are more prescriptive in terms of how buildings relate to the street and to each other. Consider making this a four-way intersection.	PZC Staff	<b>2</b>
14. Consider ways to require off-street parking to be located to the side or rear of buildings and discourage parking in front of buildings and adjacent to the street.	PZC Staff	
15. Encourage shared parking and ample sidewalks	PZC Staff	
16. Encourage the concentration of appropriate development around the intersection to create a "City Center" which will serve the residents of the City and local employees.	PZC Staff	
17. Consider reducing the area of the General Commercial zone : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• along Poquonnock Road east of Benham Road (or possibly High Street).</li> <li>• along Mitchell Street north of Hamilton Avenue.</li> </ul>	PZC Staff	<b>2</b>

**Enhance Community Appearance**

	Who	Priority
18. Enhance the "sense of place" in the City by improving gateway areas and associated roadways, with particular emphasis to the areas along Bridge Street and Thames Street.	DOT CC	
19. Extend the "gateway" concept to signage that guides people to activity centers in the City.	Staff	<b>2</b>
20. Consider allowing major land uses (such as Pfizer, Electric Boat, Avery Point, and Fort Griswold) to have additional identification signage provided it is consistent with the overall "gateway" and "wayfinding" themes established by the City.	Staff	<b>2</b>
21. To enhance the overall appearance and environment in pedestrian-oriented areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide for generous sidewalks,</li> <li>• use consistent pedestrian-scale street lighting,</li> <li>• encourage business uses to enhance the streetscape by providing street furniture and awnings (where appropriate).</li> </ul>	PZC Staff	
22. To enhance the overall appearance and environment City-wide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• undertake a street tree planting program focusing on main thoroughfares and pedestrian oriented areas,</li> <li>• maintain street tree planting requirements in the subdivision regulations, and</li> <li>• modify zoning regulations to increase landscaping requirements.</li> </ul>	PZC Staff	<b>2</b>
23. Discourage (or prohibit) the establishment of fences / walls that detract from the overall ambience of the City and its residential neighborhoods (such as opaque fences or walls in front yards).	PZC Staff	
24. Require the underground installation of utilities for all new development and, when opportunities arise, put existing overhead utilities underground.	PZC GUC Staff	<b>1</b>
25. Consider the adoption of a property maintenance ordinance.	CC	<b>3</b>

# GUIDE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



# 7

Business development, which is the most visible form of economic development, is typically sought after by communities because:

- it provides employment to residents,
- it offers goods and services, and
- it provides tax revenue to fund local services.

Over the last century or so, the City of Groton has seen significant economic growth due to the City's location, water access, and transportation system. This growth was most noticeable as a result of submarine production (at the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics) and the US Submarine Base upriver during World War II and the ensuing "Cold War".

However, major economic changes have occurred over the past 10 to 15 years. Submarine production has slowed and employment at Electric Boat has decreased. This decrease was partly offset by the growth of Native American casinos in the region. During the same period, the Pfizer Corporation decreased pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities and established additional global research facilities in Groton.

While the overall economy in Groton and the region has gone through a major metamorphosis over the past few decades, it appears to be poised for the future.

***Promote business and economic development that will create a diversified economy, a variety of employment opportunities, and will enhance the City.***

## **Major Employers**

---

**Pfizer** - It is anticipated that Pfizer will continue to seek ways to expand its research facilities.

Expansion should be expedited to the extent possible while assuring protection of the environment and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

**Electric Boat** - Expansion of facilities at Electric Boat is not anticipated within the foreseeable future.

However, should General Dynamics make some property available for development, the City should strive to ensure that the new development will enhance the City economically and otherwise.

Remote parking lots which may, at some point in time, no longer be necessary present opportunities for logical infill development, particularly in the "Five Corners" area and surrounding streets.

**UConn Avery Point** - While the University of Connecticut at Avery Point does not directly contribute to the tax base (except for payments in lieu of taxes), it represents an important economic development opportunity related to marine sciences and technology.

## **Continue To Promote Economic Development**

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Business and economic development is and will continue to be a priority for the City. Overall, about 25 percent of the City's land area is zoned for business or industrial uses and about 17 percent of the land area is used for business or industrial uses. The availability of municipal sewer and an ample supply of water makes the City of Groton an excellent location for business and industrial development.

### **Overall**

During the planning period, the City should continue to support economic development and the continued use of existing business-zoned lands for appropriate uses. This will help to maintain the economic strength of the City and provide for additional economic diversity.

The City should continue to work with major employers (such as Pfizer, Electric Boat, and the University of Connecticut campus at Avery Point) to anticipate their changing needs and to see how those needs can be met in ways that will enhance the overall character and quality of life in the City.

In conjunction with the Town of Groton, the City should participate in implementation of the Groton Strategic Economic Development Plan.

In addition, the City should continue to facilitate future business development by:

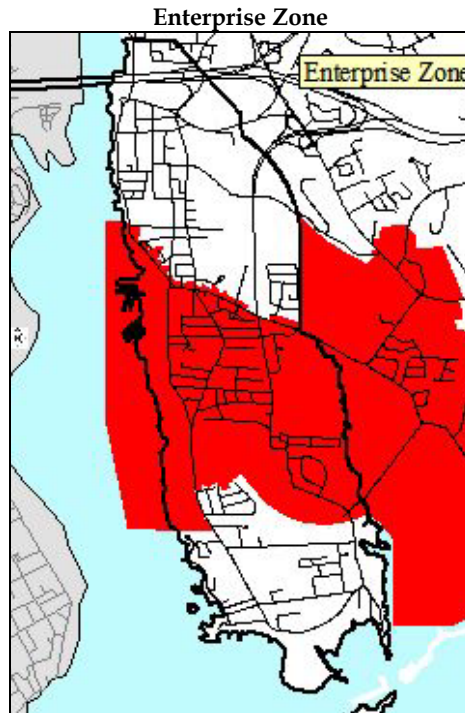
- encouraging expansion of other existing businesses, and
- attracting complimentary business establishments.

## Enterprise Zone

Part of the City of Groton (and part of the Town of Groton) was selected as an Enterprise Zone community by the State of Connecticut in 1995. The Enterprise Zone is an economic development tool where economic incentives are made available to eligible manufacturing and service sector businesses to stimulate investment in new plant and equipment and to expand or create new jobs.

This is an important economic development advantage for the City because a limited number of municipalities in Connecticut have been designated as Enterprise Zones and it provides strong incentives to attract new investment to the City's industrial sector.

This designation should continue to be promoted. The City should publicize and promote the benefits available to potential businesses in order to promote economic development in this part of the City.



## Heritage Park

Over the past decade or so, the City of Groton has been working with the Town of Groton, City of New London, the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to establish a Heritage Park for the Thames River. The Heritage Park would interconnect different attractions in the region (such as downtown New London, Nautilus Museum, Thames Street, Fort Griswold) with water transport and pedestrian connections.

These efforts should continue and the City should remain an integral part of this process since this will support the tourism "cluster" that exists in the City and surrounding areas.

## Consider Revising Regulations

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### Eastern Point Road Area

In 2005, the City received an “Industrial Zoning Revision Study” prepared by Harrall-Michalowski Associates (HMA). This study, which grew out of the 1996 Plan of Development for the City, addressed the fact that the industrial zoning in the City was established in a different “era” and that revisions were desired in order to better protect abutting residential neighborhoods (through wider buffers, more waterfront access, and better streetscapes) while providing for the same (or greater) amount of development of industrial zones (through more lot coverage and/or higher buildings) in exchange for greater neighborhood protection.

The Revision Study recommends a new Regional Industrial (RI) zone designation (in place of the existing General Industrial and Restricted Industrial zones) specifically for the Eastern Point Road area.

The City should revisit this study before implementing its recommendations. For example, the City should consider whether it makes sense to modify the building height provisions to be based on two conditions (distance from a residential zone and distance from a public street) in order to avoid a 120’ high building located 30’ from the edge of the right-of-way.

Overall, however, the concept of updating the industrial zoning in the City should be pursued using the study as a general guide. This type of approach will help to better meet the needs of major users while providing better protection for abutting residential areas and more community amenities (such as coastal access and water views).

### Bridge Street Area

There is also a General Industrial zone and a Restricted Industrial zone located in the Bridge Street area at the north end of the City.

In order to promote the appropriate development of this area, the Plan recommends that these two industrial zones be merged into a new zoning designation with standards appropriate for this area (both a waterfront area and a gateway to the City).



### North Street (near Meridian)

Due to access issues, lot depths, topographic constraints, and the gateway nature of this area, consider:

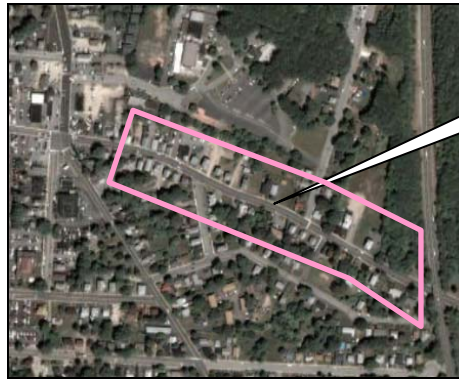
- rezoning some land on the east side of North Street out of the General Commercial zone (properties not presently used for business), and/or
- rezoning land on the west side of North Street out of the General Commercial zone.



Consider rezoning part of this area from GC

### Poquonock Road

Consider rezoning some of the property on Poquonock Road (east of Benham / Mitchell) out of the General Commercial zone to avoid the creation of strip business development patterns and to avoid diluting overall business demand in the City.



Consider rezoning this area from GC

### Eastern Point (at Benham)

Consider rezoning the land in the triangle at the intersection to a neighborhood retail designation. Promote a more pedestrian-friendly character in this location to the extent feasible.



### Parking Lots

As opportunities arise, the City should encourage redevelopment of parking lots originally established for Electric Boat for office or industrial or residential uses (but not retail) when such sites are in or near the Five Corners area and/or Poquonock Road. In addition to supporting the development of a mixed-use node at the Five Corners and providing new opportunities for economic development, this has the potential to establish a more effective transition between industrial and residential uses.

## Consider Establishing A Development Agency

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At some time in the future, it may make sense for the City to evaluate the feasibility and desirability of establishing a local development authority as authorized under Chapter 132 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS 8-186 to 8-200).

The City may wish to consider establishing such an agency to promote the appropriate development of certain areas. This agency might be useful to assist in the appropriate development of Thames Street, Five Corners, and other areas and as a mechanism for obtaining grants or promoting other activities.

### Summary of Chapter 132 - Municipal Development Projects

**Overview** - The legislative body creates a development agency to plan and implement the acquisition and improvement of unified land areas to be used principally for industrial or business purposes.

**Powers** - The development agency:

1. may, with the approval of the legislative body, issue bonds, accept grants, advances, loans or other financial assistance from the federal government, the state or other source, and may do any and all things necessary or desirable to secure such financial aid.
2. may purchase, lease, exchange or gift real property within the project area.
3. may, with the approval of the legislative body, ... transfer ... the whole or any part of the real property in the project area to any person, in accordance with the project plan and such disposition plans.
4. may, with the approval of the legislative body, and in the name of the municipality, acquire real property by eminent domain.
5. shall have all the powers necessary or convenient to undertake and carry out development plans and development projects.

# Economic Development Plan

City of Groton, CT



**ELECTRIC BOAT**

## Legend

### Existing Zoning to Remain

Other General Commercial

### Possible Future Zoning

Proposed Regional Industrial

Proposed Light Industrial

Thames / Bridge District

Five Corners District

Possible Rezoning from GC

Possible Rezoning to Neighborhood Business

### Overlay

Enterprise Zone



**Planimetrics**

31 Ensign Drive, Avon, CT 06001

860-677-5267

2,000

Feet

**AVERY POINT**

**PFIZER**

349

349

1

95

95

Mitchell St.

Eastern Pt. Rd.

Bridge Ave.

Shennecossett Rd.

Plant St.

Tyler Ave.

Poquonock

## Water Dependent Use

A “water dependent use” is a use which requires access to water in order to function. For example, a shipyard and an oil terminal are both water dependent uses.

A residential use is not a “water dependent use” although it might be rendered “water dependent” if it provides for public access to the waterfront.



### Search Terms

“Water Dependent Use”

## Address Water-Related Uses

In communities along Connecticut’s coast, recreational marina facilities have historically been intermingled in residential neighborhoods, often existing as non-conforming uses under zoning. As a result, the water-dependent use (marina) typically requires a more involved permitting process than a less water-dependent use (residential).

This appears to be the case along Shennecossett Road at Pine Island Bay and Baker’s Cove.

The City may wish to pro-actively encourage and protect recreational marina uses at appropriate locations. To do this, the City may wish to establish a new zoning designation which provides for these water-dependent uses, preclude heavier marine commercial or industrial uses, and prevent replacing water-dependent uses with residential uses.



## Strategies

### Continue To Promote Economic Development

	Who	Priority
1. Continue to promote and support economic development.	Staff	
2. Continue to work with major employers to anticipate and help address their changing needs.	Staff	
3. Continue to cooperate with the Town and the region in coordinated economic development efforts (such as the Strategic Plan).	Staff	
4. Continue to promote and take advantage of the Enterprise Zone designation in the City.	Staff	
5. Continue to promote the "Heritage Park" concept and inclusion of the City attractions (Thames Street and Fort Griswold).	Staff	

### Consider Revising Regulations

	Who	Priority
6. Revisit the Industrial Zoning Revision Study (review of building height and other provisions of the regulations).	PZC Staff	<b>1</b>
7. Following the review, consider implementing the recommendations of the Industrial Zoning Revision Study, as appropriate.	PZC	<b>1</b>
8. Consider merging the General Industrial / Restricted Industrial zones into a new zoning designation appropriate for the Bridge Street area.	PZC Staff	<b>1</b>
9. Consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rezoning land along North near Meridian from commercial due to restricted sight lines and shallow properties.</li> <li>rezoning land on Poquonock (east of Benham / Mitchell) from commercial to avoid the creation of strip business development patterns.</li> <li>rezoning some of the land at the intersection of Eastern Point at Benham to a neighborhood retail designation.</li> <li>encouraging redevelopment of some land near Electric Boat which is used as parking to provide for office or industrial or residential uses (but not retail).</li> </ul>	PZC Staff	<b>1</b>

### Responsibility Legend

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
<b>CWC</b>	Conservation / Wetlands Comm.
<b>DEP</b>	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
<b>DOT</b>	Connecticut Department of Transportation
<b>EPHD</b>	Eastern Point Historic District Comm.
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<b>Staff</b>	City of Groton Staff
<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

### Priorities Legend (Tasks)

<b>1</b>	High Priority
<b>2</b>	Moderate Priority
<b>3</b>	Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

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<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

### Consider Establishing A Development Agency

	Who	Priority
10. Evaluate the feasibility and desirability of establishing a local "development authority" to help promote economic development.	CC Staff	<b>3</b>

### Address Water-Related Uses

	Who	Priority
11. Proactively encourage and protect the marina uses along Shennecossett Road at Pine Island Bay and similar locations.	PZC Staff	
12. In order to protect areas with marina uses (and preclude heavier marine commercial or industrial uses), consider establishing a new recreational boating zoning classification that would prevent replacing water-dependent uses with residential uses.	PZC Staff	<b>1</b>

### Priorities Legend (Tasks)

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.



# MANAGE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



# 8

About one-third of the land area in the City is devoted to residential use. Within its borders, the City has a variety of housing types ranging from single-family and two-family dwellings to larger multi-family complexes. In the future, the overall aim of the City should be to protect existing residential neighborhoods and promote a variety of housing types to help address the housing needs of the community and the region.

*Protect existing residential neighborhoods and provide for a variety of housing types to help meet the housing needs of all segments of the population.*

Single Family Housing



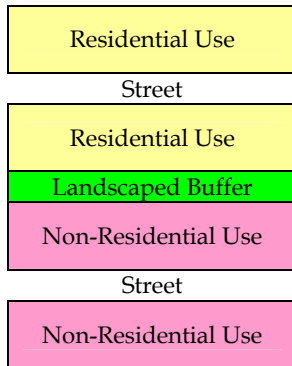
Multi-Family Housing



## Land Use Transitions

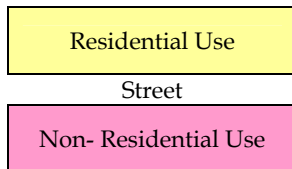
Encourage land use transitions to the side and rear of properties (and maintain "like uses facing like uses" across streets):

Example:

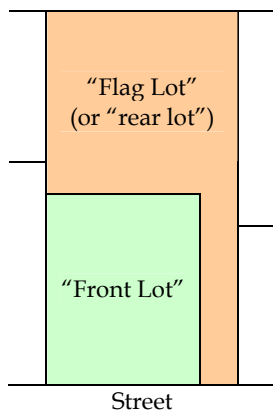


Discourage land use transitions across streets:

Example:



## Flag Lot



## Protect Existing Residential Neighborhoods

There are at least six residential neighborhoods in the City - four that are primarily single-family and two that are predominantly multi-family.

For all residential neighborhoods, the following neighborhood compatibility policies are recommended:

- Continue to discourage the establishment of new social service uses (such as halfway houses and community residential counseling facilities) in residential areas.
- Continue to limit the establishment of institutional and other non-residential uses in residential neighborhoods, especially single family.
- Continue to address noise and other nuisance issues (such as property maintenance) through public education and code enforcement.

For the single-family neighborhoods, the following neighborhood compatibility policies are recommended:

- Continue efforts to maintain the integrity and visual qualities of single-family neighborhoods
- Pursue funding that will provide for housing rehabilitation and continue to implement rehabilitation programs/projects that retain the viability of single-family neighborhoods
- Strive to maintain a principle of "like uses facing like uses" (while allowing the backs of uses to serve as a land use transition, typically with a landscaped buffer). [see sidebar]
- Continue to review and improve regulations for "flag lot" development in single-family neighborhoods so that "front lots" have appropriate visual and privacy protection. [see sidebar]

When possible, convert parking lots on small parcels in single-family residential areas to single family residential purposes so that they do not detract from the quality of the residential environment.

## **Continue To Address Housing Needs**

---

As stated previously, the City has a diverse and balanced housing mix and it wants to maintain this attribute. At the same time, the City seeks to offer support to new and different housing opportunities to meet the housing needs of diverse population segments.

While Groton can provide for a wide diversity of housing densities and types (due to the availability of water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure and other amenities), most other communities in the region are confined to only offering single-family detached homes.

### **Housing For An Aging Population**

As people live longer and healthier lives, there will be more people seeking alternatives to the single-family home in a suburban setting. While some people will continue to live in their current residence, other people may wish to relocate to smaller units in the City or elsewhere for lifestyle, health, or economic reasons. The City has housing units to help meet this need and some of the other recommendations of the Plan (vibrant mixed-use nodes, open space trails, etc.) will help to support this.

To address these needs, the City of Groton may wish to seek ways to provide for publicly assisted elderly housing and/or elderly tax relief.

### **Housing For Limited Means**

In most communities, housing affordability is a major public policy concern since it can:

- limit economic development potential,
- affect community diversity, and
- result in the establishment of “set-aside” developments that do not have to abide by local zoning regulations.

Fortunately, housing units in the City are relatively affordable compared to region and state averages and the City of Groton appears to have enough “affordable housing” to be exempt from the Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes).

## **Statutory Reference**

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“The Plan shall make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region.”

“The Plan shall promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs.”

CGS 8-23

## Buildable Area

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“Buildable area” is that portion of a parcel of land which is not encumbered by the presence of wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, or floodplain.

Parcel Area

— Wetlands Area

— Watercourses Area

— Steep Slopes Area

— Floodplain Area

---

== Buildable Area

## Consider Revising Regulations

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While most of the land in the City is developed, there is the potential for some new residential development or redevelopment in the future. The City should take steps to ensure that any such development occurs with consideration given to the natural capabilities of the land.

The City should maintain the procedure in the Subdivision Regulations (Section 5.2) to determine the overall density permitted in a residential subdivision except that the City should consider:

- not excluding floodplain from the list of protected resources, and
- requiring that all of the protected resource area (instead of a percentage) be excluded when calculating the overall number of lots.

For multi-family developments, the City should consider relating the overall density allowed in a multi-family development to the “buildable area” of the parcel rather than the total area of the parcel (“buildable area = total area minus wetlands, watercourses, pre-development steep slopes, floodplain). In this way, development will be more appropriately related to the real capabilities of the parcel.

In addition, the City should consider modifying the zoning regulations to require that any future multi-family development:

- make some provision for open space either through the dedication of land in the development, dedication of land elsewhere in the City, or the payment of a fee-in-lieu of open space,
- provide greater buffers to adjacent single-family housing, and
- provide for more landscaping within the site and parking areas.

In the event of a request to rezone property to multi-family use, such rezoning should address an identified housing need in the City and be located in an appropriate location (such as a transitional use from major roads or business uses to a single-family neighborhood).

# Residential Densities Plan






City of Groton, CT

Consider rezoning  
in this area

Consider rezoning  
in this area

Consider rezoning  
to business

## Legend

-  < 11 units/acre  
Multi-Family Residence
-  < 9 units/acre  
Residence Zone 5.1  
Residence Zone 5.2  
Waterfront Business Residence
-  < 6 units/acre  
Residence Zone 8
-  < 4 units/acre  
Residence Zone 12
-  Non-residential Zones
-  Dedicated Open Space
-  Managed Open Space
-  Other Public Land
-  Community Facilities



**Planimetrics**

31 Ensign Drive, Avon, CT 06001

860-677-5267

2,000

Feet

**Responsibility Legend**

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
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**Priorities Legend (Tasks)**

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

**Strategies****Protect Existing Residential Neighborhoods**

	Who	Priority
1. Continue to promote neighborhood preservation as a key to sound planning for residential areas	PZC Staff	
2. Maintain and restore the quality and diversity of the City of Groton's existing housing stock.	Staff	
3. Consider the use of the Community Development Block Grant program to encourage housing rehabilitation and other housing options.	CC Staff	<b>3</b>
4. Preserve the integrity of existing single-family neighborhoods.	PZC	<b>1</b>
5. Consider encouraging redevelopment of excess parking lots near Electric Boat to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>single-family residential when in single-family areas, or</li> <li>multi-family residential when near mixed-use nodes or where appropriate as a transition between business and residential areas).</li> </ul>	PZC Staff	<b>1</b>

**Continue To Address Housing Needs**

	Who	Priority
6. Continue to seek ways to support new and different housing opportunities to meet the needs of diverse population segments.	PZC Staff	
7. Seek ways to provide housing for an aging population.	CC PZC Staff	<b>2</b>

**Consider Revising Regulations**

	Who	Priority
8. Ensure that residential development or redevelopment occurs with consideration given to the natural capabilities of the land by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>modifying the provisions in the subdivision regulations regarding constrained land,</li> <li>adding similar provisions to regulations for multi-family developments, and</li> <li>requiring that multi-family development make some provision for open space either through the dedication of land in the development, dedication of land elsewhere in the City, or the payment of a fee-in-lieu of open space.</li> <li>requiring that multi-family development provide a buffer to adjacent uses, especially single-family uses.</li> </ul>	PZC Staff	<b>2</b>
9. In the event of a request to rezone property to multi-family use, such rezoning should address an identified housing need in the City and be located in an appropriate location (as a transitional use from major roads or business uses to single-family neighborhoods).	PZC Staff	<b>1</b>



## ADDRESS COMMUNITY FACILITY NEEDS

# 9



Community facilities and services contribute significantly to Groton's community character and its quality of life. The Plan reviews these facilities to ensure they are appropriately located and sized to meet community needs during the planning period and beyond.

As stated previously, Groton is different from many communities because City residents receive public services from:

- the City (fire, police, public works, building, zoning, planning, solid waste),
- the Town (education, social services, assessment, vital records, tax collection), or
- both (parks and recreation).

*Continue to provide community facilities and services to meet the needs of City residents and businesses.*

Highway Garage



Broad Street Fire Station





## Address Overall Municipal Needs

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**Municipal Complex** - In the near future, the City should undertake a space needs study to determine the best way to address the space needs at the Municipal Complex.

Since 1997, the level of activity has significantly increased at the Municipal Complex on Meridian Street with the:

- addition of the highway department garage,
- the introduction of a cable television operation (both office and field operations), and
- growth in other staffing at the City Hall (including Groton Utilities).

This has resulted in space constraints within the building and on the site (especially in terms of parking and storage for police, public works, and cable television operations). In fact, there are several temporary office structures (trailers) on the site at the present time in order to help address some of the space needs at the complex. Additionally, the Police Department notes that the current layout of the building is not conducive to the safety of officers, staff and public.

**Municipal Complex**



The Highway Department is currently experiencing significant space issues. The space constraints are two-fold. First the building is poorly configured for the needs of the department in terms of using, storing and maintaining vehicles and equipment. Second, there is inadequate space on the site for storage of materials (sand, salt, pipe, stone, etc.). Ironically, the Highway Garage was moved to a three-acre area at the Municipal Complex site *in the past ten years* (from a 7.5-acre site located off of Brandegee Avenue) in order to facilitate the expansion of Pfizer Corporation. Given that the Highway Department now has half the site area they needed before (and has expanded onto Washington Park), this is a situation that needs to be addressed.

The Police Department is also located in the City Hall building at the Municipal Complex. The building is not configured well for current police needs (shortage of office and storage space, lack of sally-port, remote cell block, confined dispatch/public records space) and additional space is needed. The Police Department has also expressed interest in a police boat dock on the Thames River (currently it is at Shennecossett Yacht Club and this is not well located for some incidents).

In any event, the existing City Hall building is not doing a good job meeting the needs of many City departments. A comprehensive solution is needed to address space needs for offices, records, storage, and meetings. In addition, such space needs to be protected from flooding which has affected the existing building.

Several municipal departments (such as police, highway, utilities, and communications) have identified the need for a new facility for their function. Several departments have suggested that they would be the department willing to relocate to a new site. The location mentioned most often is the Colonel Ledyard School site which is located south of and adjacent to (but at a higher elevation than) the City Hall complex.

While this may be a possible (and attractive) solution, a comprehensive space needs study needs to be done to ensure that all issues are considered. Such a study may determine that it is possible to address the space needs at the Municipal Complex by:

- building additions to and renovating the existing City Hall building,
- building a new City Hall building north of the existing building and razing the existing building to make room for public works, or
- identifying one or more functions (such as City Hall) to relocate to a new site (such as Colonel Ledyard School) and retaining the existing site for other functions.

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## Education Services

The Town of Groton Board of Education provides educational services to City residents.

With changing enrollment and programmatic needs, the Town of Groton has been evaluating school facilities in Groton and is recommending changes in school configurations.

One of the outcomes from this process is the “decommissioning” of several school sites.

School facilities within the City which are projected to be decommissioned include:

- Colonel Ledyard Elementary School,
- Groton Heights Elementary School, and
- Eastern Point Elementary School.

At this time, West Side Middle School is scheduled to be converted to an elementary school in a later phase of the School Building Plan.

**Fire Stations** - The City Fire Department serves the City of Groton and, by contract, the West Pleasant Valley District to the north of the City. In addition to fire calls, the Department provides emergency medical response and other services. At the present time, the Department responds to over 1,300 calls of various types each year.

The Department consists primarily of a paid fire staff with “around the clock” service. There are a small number of volunteers who assist when available. The Department participates in mutual aid agreements with other fire districts and is assisted by fire safety equipment and personnel maintained by both Electric Boat and Pfizer. Fire hydrants, served by a public water system, are available at all points throughout the City.

There are two fire stations in the City. The main station on Broad Street (three bays) was constructed in 1964 and the Eastern Point Station on Shennecossett Road (two bays) was recently built to replace a previous fire station. The Department reports that more storage space is needed to meet current and future needs.

Overall, the City enjoys very good fire / emergency medical response at the present time. The Department would like to have more space to meet their current and future needs. A space needs study will help the City to evaluate these needs and determine who they might be best addressed.

Over the longer term, a bigger issue may be how to respond to any changes which may occur to the fire staffing at Pfizer or Electric Boat. While no action needs to be taken at the present time, some thought should be given to whether the capabilities of the City’s Fire Department may need to be increased in the future if either of those departments is reduced in capability.

**Broad Street Fire Station**



**Eastern Point Fire Station**



## **Continue To Address Recreation Needs**

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The City maintains a number of key facilities to help address the park and recreational needs of residents:

- George Washington Park - the largest City recreational facility.
- Eastern Point Beach - the swimming beach.
- Birch Plain Creek - an area for picnicking and hiking.
- boat launches.

Other facilities available to residents include:

- the Shennecossett Municipal Golf Course ( owned by the Town),
- recreational facilities at public schools (maintained by the Board of Education ), and
- the University of Connecticut campus at Avery Point which offers a waterfront park setting.

Over the years, the City has done a good job of addressing local recreational needs. At this time, recreational desires which have been identified by the City Parks and Recreation Department include:

1. A community center providing opportunities for active and passive uses (additional study of this may be needed).
2. Expansion and enhancement of the City Beach.
3. A small park/ playground near or south of the center of the City.
4. Passive areas (such as multi-purpose trails, greenbelts, etc.).
5. Additional useable public access to the Thames River.

The Department would like to have more fields to meet existing needs and this will become more acute if the City loses the fields they currently use at the school sites. From a recreational perspective, the most important school sites for exterior activities may be West Side Middle School and Eastern Point followed by Groton Heights and Colonel Ledyard.

In the future, it may make sense for the City to consider the potential for the department to become financially self-dependent (in terms of using recreation revenues to be used to fund recreation activities).

Finally, the Department is responsible for maintenance of the grounds at City facilities. If the City adds additional facilities or land area in the future (through purchase, grants, or set-asides as part of the subdivision process), additional staff and equipment may be needed for grounds maintenance.

## **Support and Monitor Other Services**

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### **Library**

The Bill Memorial Library, an independent library located in the City, is part of the overall library system in the Town of Groton (the other libraries are the Groton Public Library on Route 117 and the Mystic and Noank Library in Mystic). While privately funded, the City does assist the library in a number of ways. The City should continue to support this library to help meet community needs.

### **Waste Disposal**

The City collects municipal solid waste, recyclable materials, and bulky waste within the City. Additional space for these activities would be desirable. The City has a long term disposal agreement with a resource recovery facility which should meet City needs for the foreseeable future. Anticipated changes in recycling (quantity, types) will likely have an impact on the amount of space needed for public works facilities.

**Bill Memorial Library**



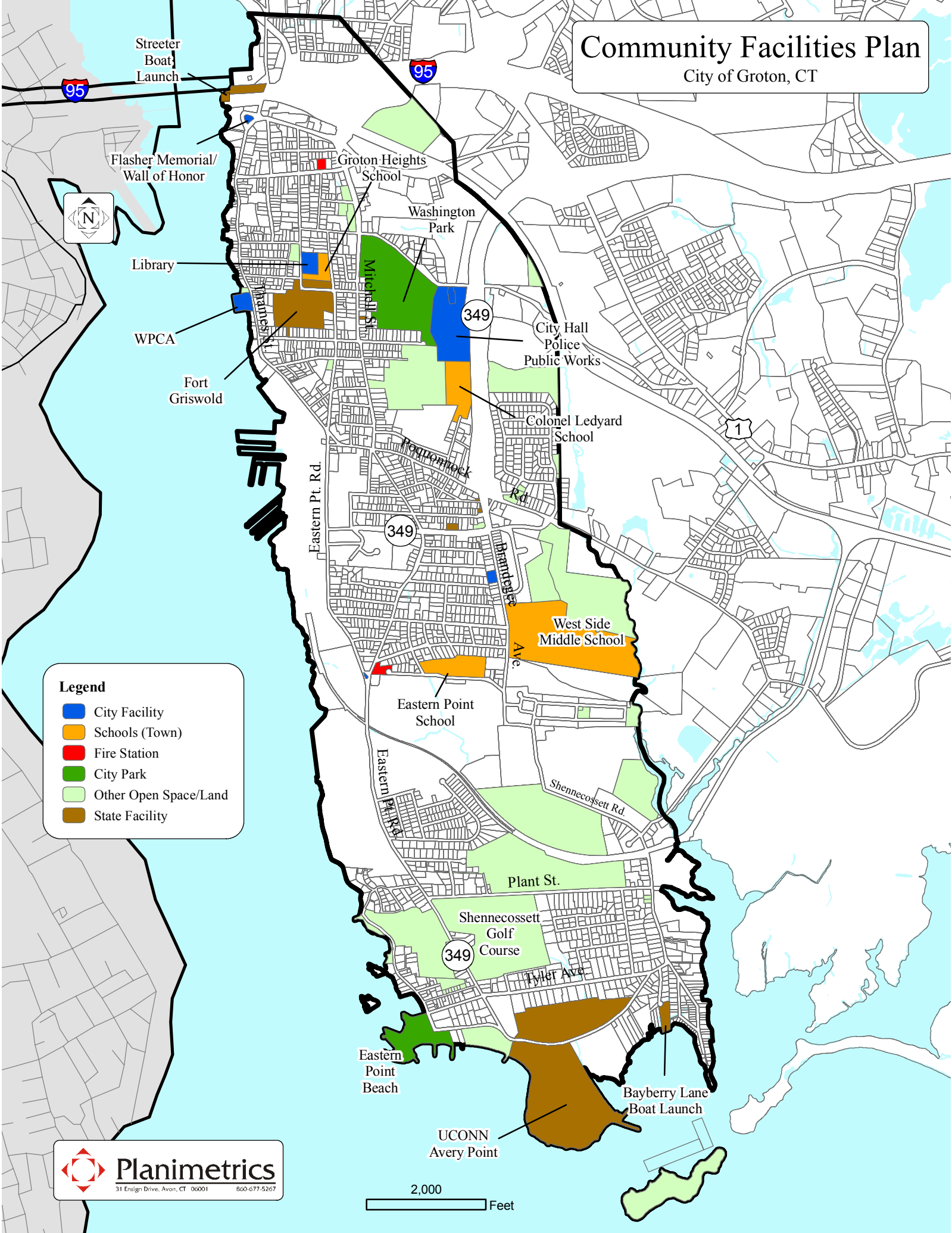
**Highway Garage**





# Community Facilities Plan

City of Groton, CT



## Legend

- City Facility
- Schools (Town)
- Fire Station
- City Park
- Other Open Space/Land
- State Facility

**Responsibility Legend**

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
<b>CWC</b>	Conservation / Wetlands Comm.
<b>DEP</b>	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
<b>DOT</b>	Connecticut Department of Transportation
<b>EPHD</b>	Eastern Point Historic District Comm.
<b>GUC</b>	Groton Utilities Commission
<b>HMC</b>	Harbor Management Commission
<b>PZC</b>	Planning and Zoning Commission
<b>Staff</b>	City of Groton Staff
<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

**Priorities Legend (Tasks)**

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

**Strategies****Address Overall Municipal Needs**

	Who	Priority
1. Explore ways to work with the Town of Groton in terms of potential disposition of school sites within the City (including obtaining a right of first refusal).	CC Staff	<b>1</b>
2. Undertake a comprehensive space needs study to determine the best way to address the space needs at the Municipal Complex.	CC Staff	<b>1</b>
3. Undertake a study to determine the best way to address the long-term space needs of the Fire Department.	CC Staff	<b>3</b>
4. Consider alternative strategies which may allow for any changes which may occur to fire staffing at Pfizer or Electric Boat.	CC Staff	

**Continue to Address Recreation Needs**

	Who	Priority
5. Work with the Town to preserve what the City has now in terms of the use of the Town school sites for recreation.	CC BPC Staff	<b>1</b>
6. Over the longer term, seek to address the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the need for a community center for active and passive uses.</li> <li>Expansion and enhancement of the City Beach.</li> <li>A small park/ playground near / south of the center.</li> <li>Passive areas (such as multi-purpose trails greenbelts, etc.).</li> <li>Additional public access to the Thames River.</li> </ul>	CC BPC Staff	<b>2</b>
7. Continue to coordinate recreation programs among various public and private organizations to maximize recreational opportunities,	BPC Staff	
8. Seek to identify and preserve any areas which are potentially high in active recreational potential.	BPC Staff	<b>2</b>
9. Consider acquiring a school site from the Town of Groton (such as West Side Middle School, should it become available) in order to provide for current and future recreation space needs.	CC BPC Staff	<b>1</b>

**Support and Monitor Other Services**

	Who	Priority
10. Continue to support the Bill Memorial Library.	CC TOG	
11. Explore alternative/supplementary uses of educational and other municipal facilities during non-school off hours.	Staff Other	



# ADDRESS TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

# 10



The transportation system of a community affects its growth and development as well as its character and quality of life. The transportation system in the City includes:

- the overall vehicular circulation network, and
- the pedestrian, bicycle, and other circulation modes.

*Provide for a transportation system which balances safe and efficient vehicular movement with other needs.*

## Address Vehicular Transportation

---

The overall road system in the City is essentially established and meets the basic needs of residents and businesses. However, there are some strategies that the City may wish to consider to maintain or enhance the vehicular transportation system.

First, the City should continue to effectively manage activities along existing roadways in order to preserve their capacity and maintain community character.

Since Route 349 is the major roadway providing access to Electric Boat , UCONN at Avery Point and Pfizer, the capacity of this roadway should be maintained and improved. At the present time, some traffic from these facilities spills over to local streets as people try to avoid peak-hour congestion or seek alternative routes. The City should continue to seek ways to route traffic away from residential neighborhoods. Narrowing the pavement on some streets (such as Mitchell Street / North Street) might also help to discourage traffic through the City. In the long-term, the City may wish to work with the Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT-DOT) to continue the Route 349 limited access concept further.

Second, the City should continue its excellent maintenance of City streets in order to minimize the total cost required. At the present time, the City improves about one mile of the City's 27 miles of streets each year -- an excellent way to maintain roads with an estimated 30-year useful life-span. Since much of this funding comes from the Town, continued cooperation and funding is critical.

The City should continue to encourage the use of alternative means of transportation to the single occupant automobile, including carpool and vanpool matching services, commuter parking lots and expanded bus service to reduce air pollution and alleviate traffic congestion, through coordination with the Town, State and employers. The City could explore the possibility of offering certain bonuses to industrial neighbors that develop and implement an alternate transportation program for employees with measurable outcomes.

The City should continue improving the paving, sidewalks and streetscape along Thames Street. While the design of some improvements may need to be changed due to climatic and other considerations, this work is important in terms of improving the pedestrian environment and overall aesthetics of the area.

#### **Local Road Classifications and Segments**

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**Limited Access Highways** - Roads that serve regional traffic and have limited access.

- Interstate 95
- Route 349 from I-95 to Rainville Ave

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**Arterials** - Highways which carry both regional and local traffic from the collectors.

- Route 349 (Rainville and Eastern Point Roads to Shennecossett Road)
- Brandegee Ave (city)

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**Collectors** - Take traffic from local streets and direct it to arterial highways system.

- Benham Road (city)
- Bridge St. Ext. (city and Town)
- Eastern Point Road: from Poquonnock Rd to Rainville Ave (city)
- Fairview Ave (city)
- John St. (city)
- Meridian St. (city)
- Mitchell Street (city)
- North St. (city)
- Plant St. (city)
- Poquonnock Rd from Thames to Rainville (city)
- Shennecossett Road (part)
- Thames Street (city)
- Thomas Road (Town and city)

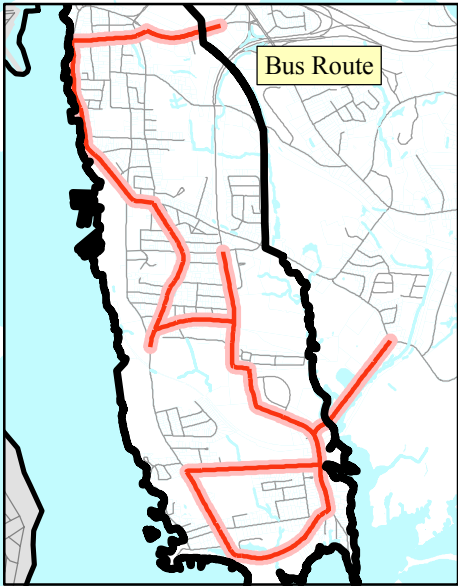
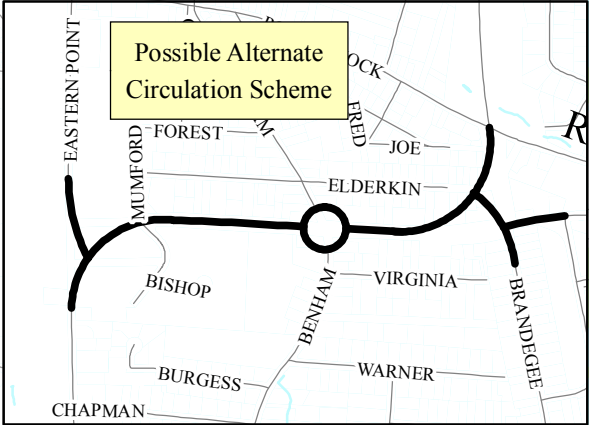
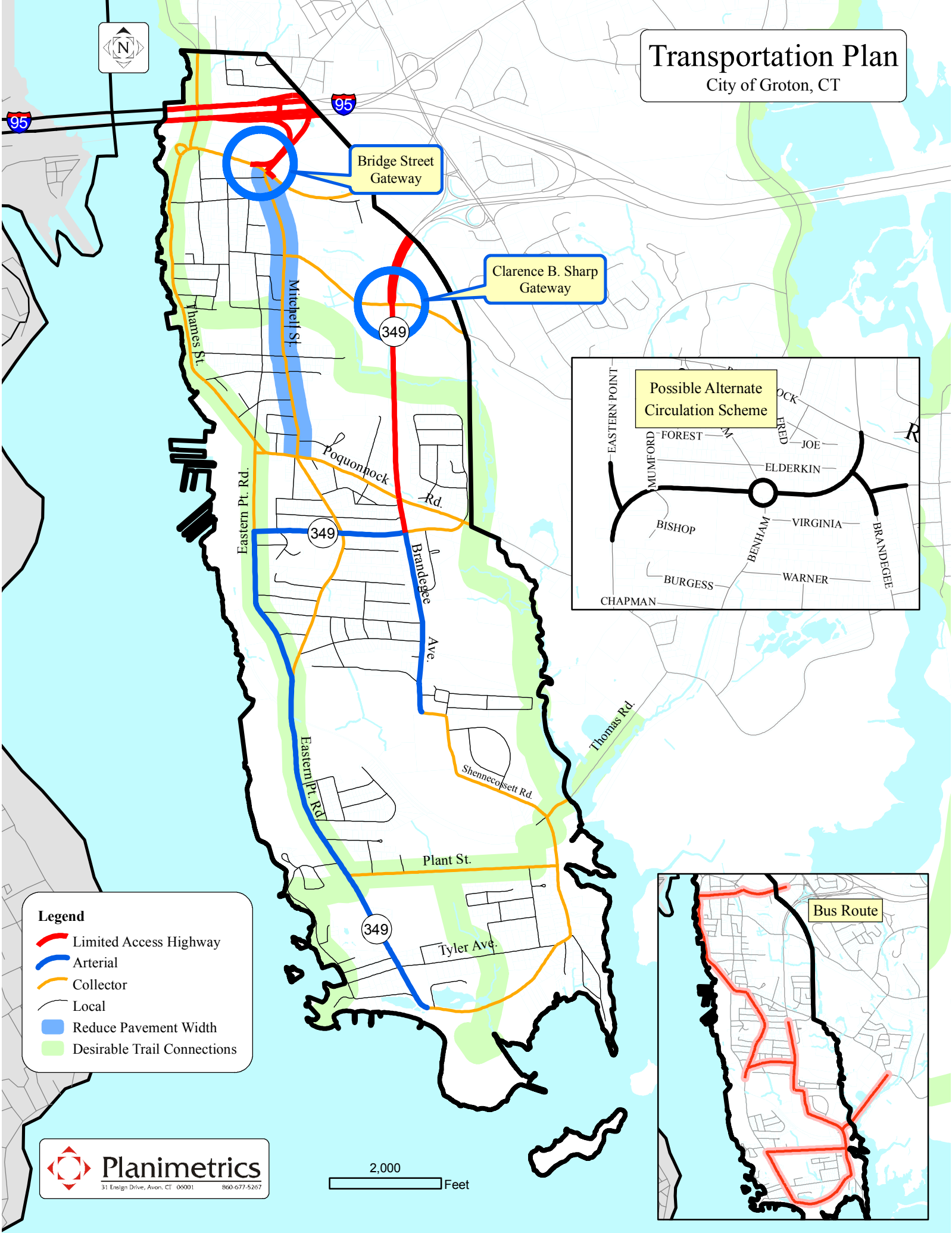
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**Local** - Roads providing access to neighborhoods and individual properties

- Other roads and streets in the City of Groton.

# Transportation Plan

City of Groton, CT



**Legend**

- Limited Access Highway
- Arterial
- Collector
- Local
- Reduce Pavement Width
- Desirable Trail Connections

## Address Pedestrian / Bicycle Transportation

---

An important recommendation in the Plan is to maintain and enhance the overall pedestrian / bicycle network in the City. Sidewalks, trails, and bikeways provide for safe pedestrian and bicycle circulation, an important element in creating and maintaining an active and vital community. The eventual goal should be to interconnect all of the pedestrian walkways in the City (sidewalks, paths, trails) into a cohesive overall system.

**Overall** - In 2005, the Town of Groton completed a Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan which included an inventory of existing trails, sidewalks, and bike paths and recommendations for proposed. The City Planning and Zoning Commission endorsed the Plan. The City should continue to refer to this Plan and act on opportunities to implement its recommendations.

**Sidewalks** - The City has a concentration of sidewalks and the installation of sidewalks occurs as part of new development projects and when initiated by the City, through the Capital Improvement Program. In the City, owners maintain sidewalks in front of their property and the City repairs sidewalks. This policy should be continued. Efforts to extend and connect sidewalks throughout the City should continue.

**Pathways** - As previously indicated in the Open Space section of the Plan, multi-use pathways (including sidewalks, trails and other connections, both on-street and off-street) within and between open space areas will greatly enhance the value of these areas and provide transportation and recreation opportunities. Efforts to interconnect pathways throughout the City should continue.

**Bikeways** - During the planning period, the City should, in cooperation with the Town, seek to develop a network of bicycle trails along major streets and in open space and greenbelt areas.

Sidewalk



Multi-Use Path



Shared Road / Bikeway



## Address Other Transportation

---

**Transit Service** - Public transit service available in the City includes buses operated by the Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) system and the Town's dial-a-ride service for the elderly and disabled. In addition, there are private transit services for employees operated by Pfizer and Electric Boat. The City should support the maintenance and expansion of local and regional public transit services that will help meet the needs of City residents and businesses and to help achieve the City's housing, employment, and economic development objectives.

**Rail Service** - The City contains two rail lines but has limited rail service. While the main Amtrak northeast rail corridor runs through the City, the nearest passenger stations are in New London and Stonington. The Providence and Worcester (P&W) provides freight rail service to Hess Oil and Electric Boat Corporation within the City although this service is presently underutilized. Rail service improvements should be encouraged provided that negative impacts to local residents and businesses are minimized.

**Airport** - The Groton - New London Airport (located within the Town of Groton) is the fourth largest airport in the state. Due to the regional economic benefits from this facility, airport service improvements should be encouraged provided that negative impacts to local residents and businesses are minimized (since many operations involve flight paths over residential areas).

**Maritime Operations** - Groton has a tradition of maritime operations that continues to the present day (Electric Boat Corporation, Hess Oil). In addition there are commercial fishing and recreational fishing opportunities along the waterfront. Maritime operations should be protected and improvements and expansions should be encouraged provided that any negative impacts to local residents and businesses (such as land-side impacts of water-side uses) are minimized.

**Responsibility Legend**

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
<b>CWC</b>	Conservation / Wetlands Comm.
<b>DEP</b>	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
<b>DOT</b>	Connecticut Department of Transportation
<b>EPHD</b>	Eastern Point Historic District Comm.
<b>GUC</b>	Groton Utilities Commission
<b>HMC</b>	Harbor Management Commission
<b>PZC</b>	Planning and Zoning Commission
<b>Staff</b>	City of Groton Staff
<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

**Strategies****Address Vehicular Transportation**

	Who	Priority
1. Continue to effectively manage activities along existing roadways in order to preserve their capacity and maintain character. Consider installation of traffic signals with demand-trips in the roadway at key intersections such as Five Corners	PZC CC Staff	
2. Consider strategies to maintain and improve the capacity of Route 349 as the major roadway providing access to Electric Boat and Pfizer.	DOT Staff	
3. Strive to continue regular maintenance of City streets in order to minimize the total cost required.	CC TOG Staff	
4. Encourage the use of alternative means of transportation to the single occupant automobile (carpool, vanpool, commuter lots).	Staff	
5. Continue the improvements to the paving, sidewalks and street-scape along Thames Street.	CC TOG	
6. Work with state and regional agencies in the transportation planning process to prioritize local and regional road improvements.	CC PZC Staff	

**Priorities Legend (Tasks)**

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

**Address Pedestrian / Bicycle Transportation**

	Who	Priority
7. Provide for an overall pathway network in the City (sidewalk, trail, and bikeway).	PZC BPC Staff	<b>2</b>
8. Continue to follow recommendations in the Trails Master Plan so that opportunities for pedestrian / bicycle circulation are maximized.	PZC Staff	
9. Continue to appropriate municipal funds to extend, connect, and repair sidewalks throughout the community.	CC	
10. Maintain the zoning and subdivision regulations that require the installation of sidewalks for new projects.	PZC	

**Address Other Transportation**

	Who	Priority
11. Support the maintenance and expansion of local and regional public transit services (such as SEAT) that will help meet the needs of City residents and businesses.	CC Staff	
12. Support rail service improvements provided that negative impacts to local residents and businesses are minimized.	CC Staff	
13. Support airport service improvements provided that negative impacts to local residents and businesses are minimized.	CC Staff	
14. Support improvements by maritime operations provided that negative impacts to local residents and businesses are minimized.	PZC Staff	

## ADDRESS UTILITY NEEDS

# 11



In the Plan of Conservation and Development, utility infrastructure refers to utility services such as:

- piped utilities (public water, sewer, storm drainage, and natural gas)
- wired utilities (electric, telephone, and cable)
- wireless communications

The City of Groton is somewhat unique in that it operates its own utility company which provides utility services (water, sewer, electric, and cable communications) within the City and to other areas within the region.

*Provide for a utility system which meets the needs of residents and businesses.*

### Manage Piped Utility Services

---

**Public Water** - Public water service can supply adequate potable water for residential and business needs and for fire protection.

Water service is provided throughout the City (and to other areas in the region) by City of Groton Department of Utilities. Groton Utilities reports that they have an adequate supply of water to meet community needs during the planning period and beyond. In addition, Groton Utilities is in the process of identifying additional supply sources to support uses in their service area and possible expansions.

The Plan supports upgrading of water lines within the City (as needed), regional expansion of water service, and regional efforts resulting in source water protection including the Drinking Water Quality Management Plan supported by towns in the region and with funding and staff support from the State Department of Public Health.



### Drainage / Water Quality

Storm drainage systems convey rainfall and groundwater to storm drainage outfalls. While concern has been expressed about these outfalls, it is the drainage area as a whole that must be the focus of concern.

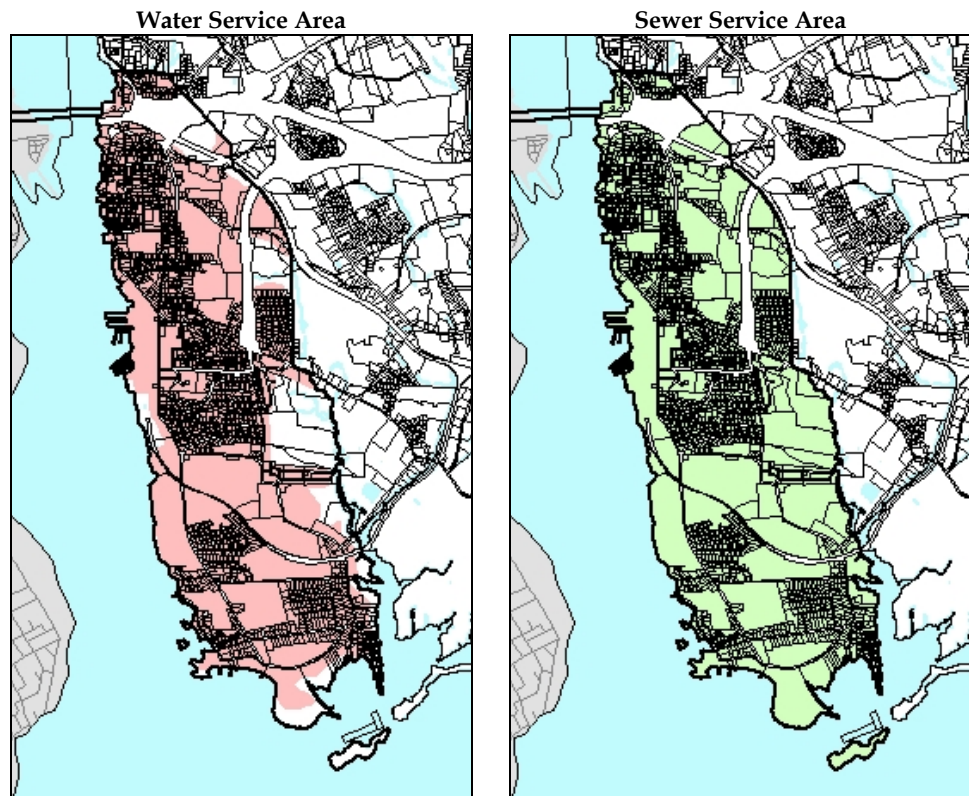
Similarly, high nutrient levels at a drainage outfall may signify septic failures or excessive fertilization in upstream areas.

**Public Sewer** - Public sewer service can provide safe and efficient sewage disposal for residential and business needs and to protect public health.

Sewage service is provided by the City of Groton with a sewage treatment facility located on the Thames River. This facility includes marine pump out capability. There is adequate sewage treatment capacity to meet community needs during the planning period and beyond.

**Natural Gas** - Yankee Gas Company provides natural gas service to Pfizer, Electric Boat Corporation and areas along Eastern Point Road, Rainville Avenue, and other locations such as Bridge Street. Service capacity and pressure are reported to be good to excellent and the system is expected to have the capability to support substantial expansion.

**Storm Water Drainage** - The management and control of storm water drainage and water quality is important in the City. During the planning period, the City should initiate and enhance programs intended to implement EPA's Phase II stormwater management program. In particular, an assessment should be made of ways to improve water quality at storm drainage outfalls (such as sedimentation basins or other techniques) since water quality can be adversely affected. In addition, the City should support programs designed to protect surface and groundwater in the watershed area and continue to monitor local water courses such as Birch Plain Creek for potential wastewater leakage.



## Manage Wired Utility Services

---

**Electric Service** - Electric service is provided by City of Groton Department of Utilities. Power is purchased on a wholesale basis from generators and distributed over the local electrical network. Electrical capacity and reliability are reported to be adequate for service demands during the planning period. System upgrades are continually being planned to address any issues. Conservation strategies are also available to reduce electrical use and maintain capacity.

At the present time, local regulations require underground electrical service only for new developments of five lots or more. The City may wish to modify local regulations to require that all new or replacement utility services are placed underground.

While the City desires to have all overhead utility wires placed underground, it can be expensive to “retro-fit” an area with underground utility services. Utility companies will bury their utility lines provided that the company is reimbursed for the cost of work. Since the City has some influence over the electrical utility, this should be part of an on-going effort to put more wires underground over time, especially on Thames Street and at Five Corners.

**Street Lights** - The City has an extensive street light system and requires that street lights “be shown on the subdivision plan in quantity, location, and type sufficient to assure public safety.” This policy has proven to be adequate to meet the City’s needs and should be continued.

**Telephone/Cable Communications** - The availability of telephone and cable communications is becoming increasingly important to quality of life and community character. Through Thames Valley Communications, the City of Groton operates and maintains a network of fiber optic cable for cable television / internet access / communication services.

## Address Wireless Services

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As wireless communications grow, the City should consider the extent to which it wants to participate in this trend. Since the City already participates in piped and wired utilities, it may want to participate in the creation of wireless “hot spots” that will attract new residents, visitors, and businesses. To help manage the siting of wireless towers, the City should maintain and occasionally review Section 4.19 of the Zoning Regulations (Telecommunications Towers, Antennae and Facilities).

**Responsibility Legend**

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
<b>CWC</b>	Conservation / Wetlands Comm.
<b>DEP</b>	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
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<b>Staff</b>	City of Groton Staff
<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

**Priorities Legend (Tasks)**

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies (see description on page 86) have a gray box in the priority column.

**Strategies****Manage Piped Utility Services**

	Who	Priority
1. Encourage Groton Utilities to continue to identify additional water supply sources in order to support existing uses in the service area and possible expansions.	CC GUC	
2. Encourage Groton Utilities to maintain and upgrade sewage facilities to meet anticipated needs during the planning period.	CC GUC	
3. Undertake a City-wide program to implement EPA's Phase II stormwater management program.	CC Staff	<b>1</b>
4. Identify ways to improve water quality at storm drainage outfalls (such as sedimentation basins or other techniques) so that water quality is not adversely affected.	Staff	<b>1</b>
5. Support expansion of the natural gas system in the City.	CC GUC	

**Manage Wired Utility Services**

	Who	Priority
6. Continue to maintain capacity and reliability within the electrical service network and promote conservation strategies.	GUC	
7. Seek to develop an on-going program to put overhead utility wires underground over time.	GUC PZC Staff	<b>1</b>
8. Consider modifying local regulations to require that all new or replacement utility services are placed underground.	PZC	<b>1</b>
9. Protect tree canopies from unreasonable destruction from utility pruning.	Staff	
10. Consider developing and adopting a consistent street lighting strategy.	GUC Staff	
11. Encourage telephone / cable communications improvements to meet the needs of residents and businesses.	GUC Staff	

**Address Wireless Services**

	Who	Priority
12. Consider whether to participate in the creation of wireless "hot spots" that will attract new residents, visitors, and businesses.	CC GUC Staff	
13. Maintain provisions in the Zoning Regulations to help manage the siting of wireless towers.	PZC	

## FUTURE LAND USE

# 12



As the Plan is implemented, the map on a following page illustrates the location and intensity of *future* land uses that are desired. Since this map illustrates the stated goals, policies, objectives, and recommendations of each of the Plan sections when combined together, it is called the Future Land Use Plan for the City of Groton.

### Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan presented on a following page contains the following categories:

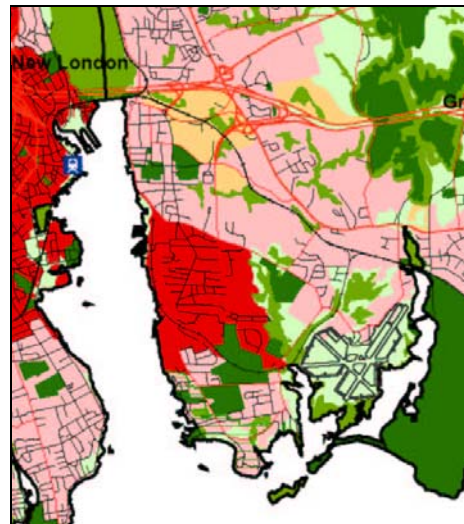
<b>Natural Resources</b>	Areas where natural resource protection is a priority of the Plan
<b>Open Space / Trails</b>	Areas with existing or desirable open space and pathways and trails
<b>Village Centers</b>	Community focal points and pedestrian-friendly village-type areas
<b>Economic Development</b>	Areas used or intended for development of business or industrial uses
<b>Residential Areas</b>	Areas used or intended for low, moderate, or higher density residential uses
<b>Community / Institutional</b>	Existing or desired uses that will help meet community needs

## Consistency With State and Regional Plans

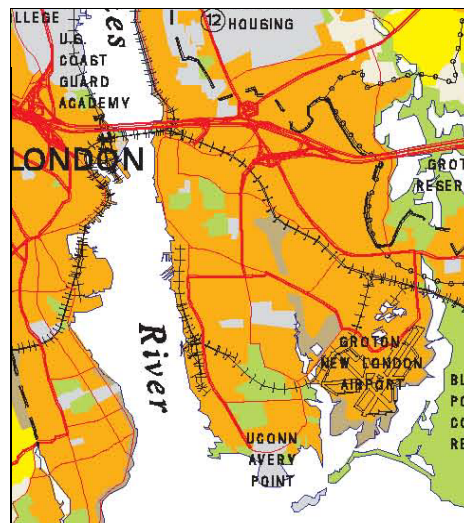
In accordance with Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Future Land Use Plan has been evaluated for consistency with the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

As part of this review, the Future Land Use Plan was found to be generally consistent with both the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

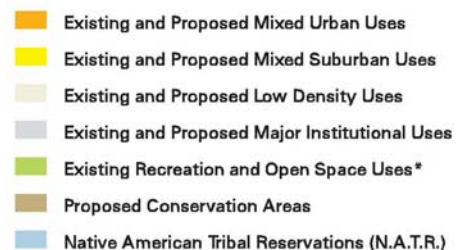
While the land use categories used are different, all three plans focus on the preservation of important natural resources and the enhancement of village areas in Groton. In addition, the Plans suggest that development occur in harmony with natural resource constraints in order to preserve and conserve important resources.



State of Connecticut  
Plan of Conservation and Development



Southeast Connecticut  
Plan of Conservation and Development





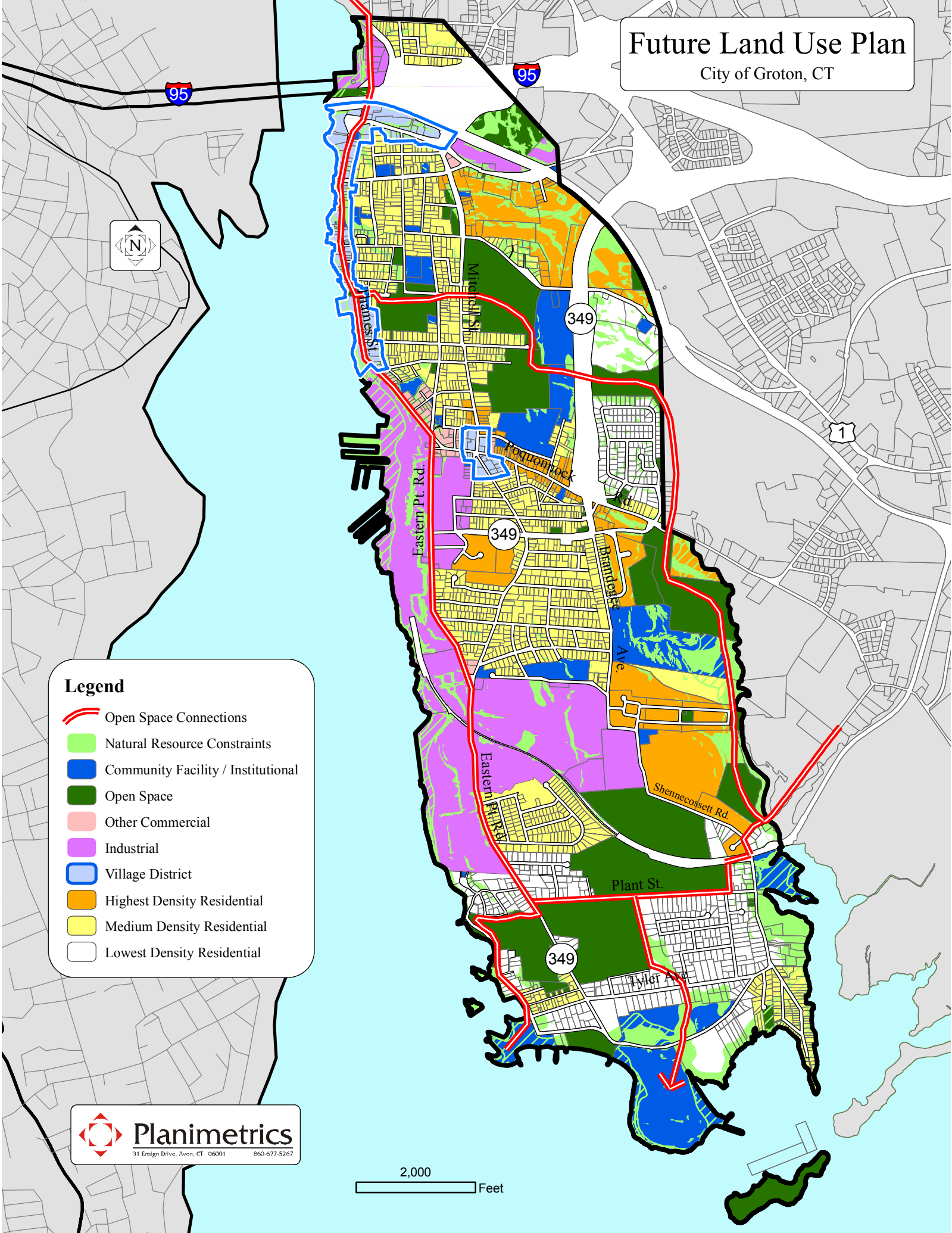
# Future Land Use Plan

City of Groton, CT



## Legend

- Open Space Connections
- Natural Resource Constraints
- Community Facility / Institutional
- Open Space
- Other Commercial
- Industrial
- Village District
- Highest Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Lowest Density Residential



## Consistency With Growth Principles

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In accordance with Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Plan of Conservation and Development has been evaluated for consistency with statewide growth management principles.

<b>Principle 1 - Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.</b>
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The State Plan of Conservation and Development designates an area in the central part of the City as a “regional center”. In accordance with this designation, this Plan recommends a number of strategies to redevelop, revitalize, and create mixed-use areas within this designated area (which has existing physical infrastructure).

In particular, the Plan supports the development of a pedestrian-friendly mixed use “village node” at the Five Corners area. In addition, the Plan supports the continued economic development activity of Pfizer and Electric Boat.

Overall, the concept of revitalizing mixed use centers which have adequate infrastructure is a key element of the Plan.

<b>Principle 2 - Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.</b>
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The City of Groton already has a diverse housing stock and offers a variety of housing choices. In fact, the City has one of the most diverse housing stocks in the southeast Connecticut region.

In addition, the Plan promotes the following policies:

- 1) enable greater diversity in the City’s housing options,
- 2) promote strategies to help address the housing needs of an aging population and for housing options that are more affordable, and
- 3) allow mixed-use developments to provide opportunities for additional housing diversity.



**Principle 3 - Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.**

The Plan of Conservation and Development recommends more intensive mixed-use development in “centers” (nodes) and along transportation corridors where bus service is available.

This will help to support overall community structure as well as transportation options and land reuse within the recommended mixed-use village areas.

**Principle 4 - Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.**

The Plan of Conservation and Development contains specific chapters which identify strategies to:

- protect natural resources (Chapter 3),
- preserve open space (Chapter 4), and
- protect historic resources, and scenic views (Chapter 5).

These strategies will help conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources.

**Principle 5 - Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.**

The Plan of Conservation and Development also contains recommendations to protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.

This includes goals, policies and objectives to protect water quality (both surface and ground), preserve floodplain areas, preserve sensitive hill-sides, renovate storm water discharges, minimize runoff, and other similar strategies.

**Principle 6 - Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.**

The Plan of Conservation and Development is part of the process of integrating planning with other levels of government and with other agencies. The Plan will be used to coordinate efforts with:

- adjacent communities,
- regional organizations, and
- state agencies.

## IMPLEMENTATION

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Implementation of the strategies and recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development is the main purpose of the planning process. Implementation of a Plan typically occurs in two main phases:

- some of the recommendations can and should be given high priority since they are critical to the implementation of the Plan;
- other recommendations will be implemented over time because they may require additional study, coordination with or implementation by others, or involve the commitment of significant financial resources.

The Planning and Zoning Commission has the primary responsibility of promoting the implementation of the Plan's recommendations. The Commission can also implement some of the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development through amendments to the Zoning Regulations, Zoning Map, Subdivision Regulations, application reviews, and other means. Other recommendations may require cooperation with and action by other local boards and commissions such as the City Council, Conservation Commission, and similar agencies.

However, if the Plan is to be realized, it must serve as a guide to all residents, businesses, developers, applicants, owners, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly conservation and development of the City of Groton.

## Plan Implementation Committee

A Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) could include representatives of various boards and commissions and would prioritize, coordinate, and refine the implementation of the Plan.

The Committee could meet two to four times a year to establish priorities and guide implementation of the Plan's recommendations.

In addition, the Committee could assess the status of specific recommendations, establish new priorities, and even suggest new implementation techniques.

### Web Page

An up-to-date web page would be an excellent way to keep the community informed about progress being made in implementing the Plan.

The web page could also inform residents about how revisions to the Plan could be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission for consideration and adoption.

## Implementation Tools / Strategies

### Plan Implementation Committee

The Planning and Zoning Commission has the responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Plan's recommendations. However, the month-to-month level of Commission activity may leave little time to do so. Alternatively, a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) might be an effective way to help implement the Plan. A PIC could use the implementation schedules that follow to develop an annual program of issues for various boards and commissions to implement.

### Plan Maintenance

A Plan of Conservation and Development should be a dynamic document that is used, reevaluated, and amended as necessary. Groton should consider keeping this Plan current and not waiting to update it every ten years. A preliminary schedule might be as follows:

Conservation Topics	Development Topics	Infrastructure Topics
2009	2010	2011
2012	2013	2014

The simplest way to update the Plan regularly might be to update major sections of the Plan on a regular basis by:

- holding a public meeting to receive input from the community,
- revising Plan sections including any changes to the Future Land Use section, as appropriate, and
- re-adopting the Plan.

### Application Reviews

Using the Plan of Conservation and Development as a basis for decisions by the Planning and Zoning Commission will also help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Plan.

All land use proposals should be measured and evaluated in terms of the Plan and its various elements. For example, if an amendment to the Zoning Regulations or Zoning Map would otherwise be inconsistent with this Plan, the Commission should require an application to amend this Plan and/or its Future Land Use Plan be submitted and processed before the Commission adopts such change.

## **Update Regulations**

Since the Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations provide specific criteria for land development at the time of applications, these regulations are important tools to implement the recommendations of the Plan. However, this is only true if the regulations reflect the recommendations of the Plan.

In the near future, the Planning and Zoning Commission should undertake a comprehensive review of the Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations, making whatever revisions are necessary to:

- make the regulations more user-friendly (such as using graphics),
- implement Plan recommendations, and
- promote consistency between the Plan and the Regulations.

## **Operating Budget**

The annual budget is the blueprint for spending in Groton and is one of the main ways that municipal policy objectives are implemented. The annual budget can be an effective way to assist with implementation of the Plan's recommendations.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider ways to complement the work done each year by the Mayor, City Council and Town Council in establishing budget priorities and strategies.

If the annual budget reflects the priorities and recommendations of the Plan, Groton will surely be successful in accomplishing its overall strategic objectives and "leveraging" private investment in the community.

## **Capital Budget**

Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that municipal improvements (as defined in the statute) be referred to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a report before any local action is taken. A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a tool for planning the major capital expenditures of a municipality so that local needs can be identified and prioritized within the fiscal constraints that may exist. The CIP is used to coordinate the financing of major public improvements and other long-term capital investments in a community.

The Planning and Zoning Commission has statutory authority for review of municipal improvements and the CIP budget. The Commission should strive to ensure that spending on capital projects also reflects the priorities and recommendations of the Plan.

## **Other Agencies**

Municipal agencies alone cannot implement the Plan. In fact, the most successful implementation will likely involve local organizations, businesses, and residents in ensuring that the Plan is implemented.

**Responsibility Legend**

<b>BPC</b>	Beach and Parks Committee
<b>CC</b>	City Council
<b>CWC</b>	Conservation / Wetlands Comm.
<b>DEP</b>	Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
<b>DOT</b>	Connecticut Department of Transportation
<b>EPHD</b>	Eastern Point Historic District Comm.
<b>GUC</b>	Groton Utilities Commission
<b>HMC</b>	Harbor Management Commission
<b>PZC</b>	Planning and Zoning Commission
<b>Staff</b>	City of Groton Staff
<b>TOG</b>	Town of Groton

**Priorities Legend (Tasks)**

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Policies have a gray box in the priority column.

## Implementation Tables

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Implementation of the Plan is an ongoing process. While the City can carry out some recommendations in a relatively short period, others may only be realized by the end of the planning period or beyond. Since some recommendations may involve additional study or a commitment of fiscal resources, their implementation may take place over several years or occur in stages.

The implementation tables in each of the preceding chapters assign primary responsibilities and preliminary schedules to the Plan's recommendations. In many instances, the responsibilities are shared by a number of entities (see sidebar).

Priorities are identified in the tables for tasks (see text following) and ranked according to a three-step scale. High priorities are items that are either critical to the success of a planning strategy or are relatively easy to implement and can be handled within one to two years. Moderate priorities are policies and tasks that are not as time sensitive as high priorities and may be more difficult to implement due to funding constraints or complexity. Moderate priorities should generally be addressed within two to four years from adoption of this Plan. Lower priorities are typically longer-range items that might require a "wait and see" approach or are preceded by higher funding priorities. Lower priorities may be addressed towards the end of the planning period.

**Policies and Tasks**

The tables in the Plan chapters outline two types of recommendations – policies and tasks. Policies are continuing types of activities that may never be fully implemented. They may be policies to maintain or considerations that are not expected to go away. Such activities are difficult to monitor in terms of implementation and do not lend themselves to target completion dates. In the implementation tables in each chapter, they have a gray box in the priority column.

Tasks, on the other hand, are activities which can be clearly defined and can be monitored in terms of implementation. Such activities lend themselves to priorities in terms of adoption or implementation.



## CONCLUSION

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The Plan of Conservation & Development has been developed to prepare the City of Groton for the challenges that it will face during the next decade and beyond.

Throughout the preparation of this Plan, a great deal of information was collected, analyzed, presented and discussed during many interviews, meetings and workshops. Through this process, an overall vision, general goals and policies were developed, resulting in the specific strategies summarized throughout this Plan.

Still, the most important part of the planning process remains to be done. Once adopted, the Plan must be implemented in order for its strategies to be put into action and its vision fulfilled.

The Plan is intended as a guide to be followed in order to enhance the quality of life and the community character of the City of Groton. It is intended to be flexible in order to allow adjustments in the manner that specific goals and objectives are achieved while maintaining stability in the long-term goals of the community.

During implementation, some goals may be achieved quickly, some goals will be achieved incrementally as time and money allow and the premise behind others will undoubtedly change, calling recommendations into question. Such situations are to be welcomed since they will mean that the Plan is being used.

The Plan of Conservation and Development is not static but a living document that is meant to be referenced, challenged and if changing circumstances warrant, amended to keep in tune with the goals and vision of the community. If the City of Groton is successful in implementing this Plan, the character of the community will be preserved and enhanced, making it an attractive place to work, shop, play, and live.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



## **Planning and Zoning Commission**

David Rose	Chair
Michael Collins	Vice-Chair
David Coleman	Secretary

Debra Jenkins  
Kenneth Jones  
Marion Orkney  
Irma Streeter

Charles E. Harrison	Alternate
Diana Kazolias	Alternate

## **POCD Update Steering Committee**

David Rose, Chair	Planning and Zoning Commission
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Janet Downs	Resident
Barbara Frucht	Zoning Board of Appeals
Charles E. Harrison	Planning and Zoning Commission
Hali Keeler	Resident
Lisa Luck	Conservation Commission
Christine Mikkola	Business Owner
Dwaine Rugh	Zoning Board of Appeals

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



## City of Groton

Dennis L. Popp	Mayor
Barbara Goodrich	City Planner
Carlton Smith	Zoning and Building Official
Sue Blanchette	Gen. Manager, Information Technology, Groton Utilities
Al Chapman	Senior Engineering Tech Aide, Engineering
John Cunningham	Deputy Fire Chief, Fire Marshal
Nicholas DeLia	Chief of Fire Department
Al Dion	Deputy Director, Water Division, Groton Utilities
Bruno Giuliani	Chief of Police
Mary Hill	Parks and Recreation Director
Debra J. Patrick	City Clerk
Brian Roche	Deputy Director, Electric Division, Groton Utilities
Anthony Timpano	Director of Finance
Tim Umrysz	Foreman, Highway Department
Glenn Wilson	Director, Groton Utilities

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**Planimetrics**

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